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# MODERN ENGLISH PROSE





**LONGER SPECIMENS**  
**OF**  
**MODERN ENGLISH PROSE**

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## FOREWORD

THIS is an anthology meant for undergraduates reading in our Indian universities. But it differs considerably from a good many other books of prose in use in colleges at the present time ; for whereas they too often consist mainly of snippets or trifles on which the mind can rest only for a while and draw no abiding sustenance, this collection contains long passages written by acknowledged masters of English prose, passages which are well fitted to show the evolution of their thought and to reveal the graces of their style. By the study of this book it will, therefore, be possible for a student to gain some idea of the breadth, range and variety of English prose. The use of *longer* specimens will also better serve another purpose, namely to stock the student's mind with noble ideas. For the pieces in this book will not merely amuse or entertain ; there are substantial arguments here for him to ' read, mark, learn and inwardly digest '. It is hoped, therefore, that the study of these passages will do something to remedy the two primary defects in the equipment of so many Indian students to-day : poverty of thought and a lack in power of self-expression.

The Notes at the end supply information mainly of an historical kind, and the editor acknowledges his debt to all the commentators who have covered the same ground before.

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## Oliver Goldsmith

W. M. THACKERAY

WHO, of the millions whom he has amused, doesn't love him? To be the most beloved of English writers, what a title that is for a man!<sup>1</sup> A wild youth, wayward, but full of tenderness and affection, quits the country village where his boyhood has been passed in happy musing, in idle shelter, in fond longing to see the great world out of doors, and achieve name and fortune—and after years of dire struggle, and neglect and poverty, his heart turning back as fondly to his native place, as it had longed eagerly for change when sheltered there, he writes a book and a poem, full of the recollections and feelings of home—he paints the friends and scenes of his youth, and peoples Auburn and Wakefield with remembrances of Lissoy. Wander he must, but he carries away a home-relic with him, and dies with it on his breast. His nature is truant; in repose it longs for change: as on the journey it looks back for friends and quiet. He passes to-day in building an air-castle for to-morrow, or in writing yesterday's elegy; and he would fly away this hour, but that a cage and necessity keep him. What is the charm of his verse, of his style, and humour? His sweet regrets, his delicate

<sup>1</sup> 'He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to it. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling distinguishes whatever he wrote, and bears a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea. . . .

'The admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make the *Vicar of Wakefield* one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed.

' . . . We read the *Vicar of Wakefield* in youth and in age—we return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature.'—SIR WALTER SCOTT.



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compassion, his soft smile, his tremulous sympathy, the weakness which he owns? Your love for him is half pity. You come hot and tired from the day's battle, and this sweet minstrel sings to you. Who could harm the kind vagrant harper? Whom did he ever hurt? He carries no weapon—save the harp on which he plays to you; and with which he delights great and humble, young and old, the captains in the tents, or the soldiers round the fire, or the women and children in the villages, at whose porches he stops and sings his simple songs of love and beauty. With that sweet story of the *Vicar of Wakefield*,<sup>1</sup> he has found entry into every castle and

<sup>1</sup> 'Now Herder came,' says Goethe in his Autobiography, relating his first acquaintance with Goldsmith's masterpiece, 'and together with his great knowledge brought many other aids, and the later publications besides. Among these he announced to us the *Vicar of Wakefield* as an excellent work, with the German translation of which he would make us acquainted by reading it aloud to us himself. . . .

'A Protestant country clergyman is perhaps the most beautiful subject for a modern idyl; he appears like Melchizedek, as priest and king in one person. To the most innocent situation which can be imagined on earth, to that of a husbandman, he is, for the most part, united by similarity of occupation as well as by equality in family relationships; he is a father, a master of a family, an agriculturist, and thus perfectly a member of the community. On this pure, beautiful, earthly foundation rests his higher calling; to him is it given to guide men through life, to take care of their spiritual education, to bless them at all the leading epochs of their existence, to instruct, to strengthen, to console them, and if consolation is not sufficient for the present, to call up and guarantee the hope of a happier future. Imagine such a man with pure human sentiments, strong enough not to deviate from them under any circumstances, and by this already elevated above the multitude of whom one cannot expect purity and firmness; give him the learning necessary for his office, as well as a cheerful, equable activity, which is even passionate, as it neglects no moment to do good—and you will have him well endowed. But at the same time add the necessary limitation, so that he must not only pause in a small circle, but may also, perchance, pass over to a smaller; grant him good nature, placability, resolution, and everything else praiseworthy that springs from a decided character, and over all this a cheerful spirit of compliance, and a smiling toleration of his own failings and those of others,—then you will have put together pretty well the image of our excellent Wakefield.

'The delineation of this character on his course of life through

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

every hamlet in Europe. Not one of us, however busy

joys and sorrows, the ever-increasing interest of the story, by the combination of the entirely natural with the strange and the singular, make this novel one of the best which has ever been written; besides this, it has the great advantage that it is quite moral, nay, in a pure sense, Christian—represents the reward of a goodwill and perseverance in the right, strengthens an unconditional confidence in God, and attests the final triumph of good over evil; and all this without a trace of cant or pedantry. The author was preserved from both of these by an elocution of mind that shows itself throughout in the form of irony, by which this little work must appear to us as wise as it is amiable. The author, Dr. Goldsmith, has, without question, a great insight into the moral world, into its strength and its infirmities; but at the same time he can thankfully acknowledge that he is an Englishman, and reckon highly the advantages which his country and his nation afford him. The family, with the delineation of which he occupies himself, stands upon one of the last steps of citizen comfort, and yet comes in contact with the highest; its narrow circle, which becomes still more contracted, touches upon the great world through the natural and civil course of things; this little skiff floats on the agitated waves of English life, and in weal or woe it has to expect injury or help from the vast fleet which sails around it.

‘I may suppose that my readers know this work, and have it in memory; whoever hears it named for the first time here, as well as he who is induced to read it again, will thank me.’—GOETHE, *Truth and Poetry; from my own Life* (English translation, vol. i, pp. 378-9).

‘He seems from infancy to have been compounded of two natures, one bright, the other blundering, or to have had fairy gifts laid in his cradle by the “good people” who haunted his birthplace, the old goblin mansion, on the banks of the Inny.

‘He carries with him the wayward elfin spirit, if we may so term it, throughout his career. His fairy gifts are of no avail at school, academy, or college: they unfit him for close study and practical science, and render him heedless of everything that does not address itself to his poetical imagination, and genial and festive feelings; they dispose him to break away from restraint, to stroll about hedges, green lanes, and haunted streams, to revel with jovial companions, or to rove the country like a gipsy in quest of odd adventures. . . .

‘Though his circumstances often compelled him to associate with the poor, they never could betray him into companionship with the depraved. His relish for humour, and for the study of character, as we have before observed, brought him often into convivial company of a vulgar kind; but he discriminated between their vulgarity and their amusing qualities, or rather wrought from the whole store familiar features of life which form the staple of his most popular writings.’—WASHINGTON IRVING.

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or hard, but once or twice in our lives has passed an evening with him, and undergone the charm of his delightful music.

Goldsmith's father was no doubt the good Doctor Primrose, whom we all of us know.<sup>1</sup> Swift was yet alive, when the little Oliver was born at Pallas, or Pallasmore, in the county of Longford, in Ireland. In 1730, two years after the child's birth, Charles Goldsmith removed his family to Lissoy, in the county Westmeath, that sweet 'Auburn' which every person who hears me has seen in fancy. Here the kind parson<sup>2</sup> brought up his eight children; and loving all the world, as his son says, fancied all the world loved him. He had a crowd of poor dependants besides those hungry children. He kept an open table; round which sat flatterers and poor friends, who laughed at the honest rector's many jokes, and ate the produce of his seventy acres of farm. Those who have seen an Irish house in the present day can fancy that one of Lissoy. The old beggar still has his allotted corner by the kitchen turf; the maimed old

<sup>1</sup> 'The family of Goldsmith, Goldsmyth, or, as it was occasionally written, Gouldsmith, is of considerable standing in Ireland, and seems always to have held a respectable station in society. Its origin is English, supposed to be derived from that which was long settled at Crayford in Kent.'—PRIOR's *Life of Goldsmith*.

Oliver's father, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather were clergymen; and two of them married clergymen's daughters.

<sup>2</sup> At church with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;  
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
And fools who came to scoff remain'd to pray.  
The service past, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal each honest rustic ran;  
E'en children follow'd with endearing wile,  
And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.  
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,  
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest;  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.  
As some tall cliff that lifts his awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

*The Deserted Village.*

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

soldier still gets his potatoes and buttermilk ; the poor cottier still asks his honour's charity, and prays God bless his Reverence for the sixpence : the ragged pensioner still takes his place by right and sufferance. There's still a crowd in the kitchen, and a crowd round the parlour-table, profusion, confusion, kindness, poverty. If an Irishman comes to London to make his fortune, he has a half-dozen of Irish dependants who take a percentage of his earnings. The good Charles Goldsmith<sup>1</sup> left but little provision for his hungry race when death summoned him : and one of his daughters being engaged to a squire of rather superior dignity, Charles Goldsmith impoverished the rest of his family to provide the girl with a dowry.

The small-pox, which scourged all Europe at that time, and ravaged the roses off the cheeks of half the world, fell foul of poor little Oliver's face, when the child was eight years old, and left him scarred and disfigured for his life. An old woman in his father's village taught him his letters, and pronounced him a dunce : Paddy Byrne, the hedge-schoolmaster, took him in hand ; and from Paddy Byrne, he was transmitted to a clergyman at Elphin. When a child was sent to school in

<sup>1</sup> ' In May this year (1768), he lost his brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, for whom he had been unable to obtain preferment in the Church. . . .

' . . . . To the curacy of Kilkenny West, the moderate stipend of which, forty pounds a year, is sufficiently celebrated by his brother's lines. It has been stated that Mr. Goldsmith added a school, which, after having been held at more than one place in the vicinity, was finally fixed at Lissoy. Here his talents and industry gave it celebrity, and under his care the sons of many of the neighbouring gentry received their education. A fever breaking out among the boys about 1765, they dispersed for a time, but reassembling at Athlone, he continued his scholastic labours there until the time of his death, which happened, like that of his brother, about the forty-fifth year of his age. He was a man of an excellent heart and an amiable disposition.'—PRIOR'S *Goldsmith*.

Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
My heart, untravell'd fondly turns to thee :  
Still to my brother turns with ceaseless pain,  
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.

*The Traveller.*

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those days, the classic phrase was that he was placed under Mr. So-and-so's *ferule*. Poor little ancestors! It is hard to think how ruthlessly you were birched; and how much of needless whipping and tears our small forefathers had to undergo! A relative—kind Uncle Contarine—took the main charge of little Noll; who went through his school-days righteously doing as little work as he could; robbing orchards, playing at ball, and making his pocket-money fly about whenever fortune sent it to him. Everybody knows the story of that famous 'Mistake of a Night', when the young schoolboy, provided with a guinea and a nag, rode up to the 'best house' in Ardagh, called for the landlord's company over a bottle of wine at supper, and for a hot cake for breakfast in the morning; and found, when he asked for the bill, that the best house was Squire Featherstone's, and not the inn for which he mistook it. Who does not know every story about Goldsmith? That is a delightful and fantastic picture of the child dancing and capering about in the kitchen at home, when the old fiddler gibed at him for his ugliness—and called him Aesop, and little Noll made his repartee of 'Heralds proclaim aloud this saying—See Aesop dancing and his monkey playing'. One can fancy a queer pitiful look of humour and appeal upon that little scarred face—the funny little dancing figure, the funny little brogue. In his life, and his writings, which are the honest expression of it, he is constantly bewailing that homely face and person; anon, he surveys them in the glass ruefully; and presently assumes the most comical dignity. He likes to deck out his little person in splendour and fine colours. He presented himself to be examined for ordination in a pair of scarlet breeches, and said honestly that he did not like to go into the Church, because he was fond of coloured clothes. When he tried to practise as a doctor, he got by hook or by crook a black velvet suit, and looked as big and grand as he could, and kept his hat over a patch on the old coat: in better days he bloomed out in plum-colour, in blue silk, and in new velvet. For some of those splendours the heirs and assignees of Mr. Filby, the tailor,

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have never been paid to this day ; perhaps the kind tailor and his creditor have met and settled the little account in Hades.<sup>1</sup>

They showed until lately a window at Trinity College, Dublin, on which the name of O. Goldsmith was engraved with a diamond. Whose diamond was it ? Not the young sizar's, who made but a poor figure in that place of learning. He was idle, penniless, and fond of pleasure :<sup>2</sup> he learned his way early to the pawnbroker's shop. He wrote ballads, they say, for the street-singers, who paid him a crown for a poem : and his pleasure was to steal out at night and hear his verses sung. He was chastized by his tutor for giving a dance in his rooms, and took the box on the ear so much to heart, that he packed up his all, pawned his books and little property, and disappeared from college and family. He said he intended to go to America, but when his money was spent, the young prodigal came home ruefully, and the good folks there killed their calf—it was but a lean one—and welcomed him back.

After college he hung about his mother's house, and lived for some years the life of a buckeen—passed a month with this relation and that, a year with one patron, a great deal of time at the public-house.<sup>3</sup> Tired of this life, it was resolved that he should go to London, and study at the Temple ; but he got no farther on the road to

<sup>1</sup> ' When Goldsmith died, half the unpaid bill he owed to Mr. William Filby (amounting in all to 79*l.*) was for clothes supplied to this nephew Hodson.'—FORSTER'S *Goldsmith*, p. 520.

As this nephew Hodson ended his days (see the same page) ' a prosperous Irish gentleman ', it is not unreasonable to wish that he had cleared off Mr. Filby's bill.

<sup>2</sup> ' Poor fellow ! He hardly knew an ass from a mule, nor a turkey from a goose, but when he saw it on the table.'—CUMBERLAND'S *Memoirs*.

<sup>3</sup> ' These youthful follies, like the fermentation of liquors, often disturb the mind only in order to its future refinement : a life spent in phlegmatic apathy resembles those liquors which never ferment and are consequently always muddy.'—GOLDSMITH, *Memoir of Voltaire*.

' He (Johnson) said " Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young ".'—BOSWELL.

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London and the woolsack than Dublin, where he gambled away the fifty pounds given to him for his outfit, and whence he returned to the indefatigable forgiveness of home. Then he determined to be a doctor, and Uncle Contarine helped him to a couple of years at Edinburgh. Then from Edinburgh he felt that he ought to hear the famous professors of Leyden and Paris, and wrote most amusing pompous letters to his uncle about the great Farheim, Du Petit, and Duhamel du Monceau, whose lectures he proposed to follow. If Uncle Contarine believed those letters—if Oliver's mother believed that story which the youth related of his going to Cork, with the purpose of embarking for America, of his having paid his passage-money, and having sent his kit on board; of the anonymous captain sailing away with Oliver's valuable luggage in a nameless ship, never to return; if Uncle Contarine and the mother at Ballymahon believed his stories, they must have been a very simple pair; as it was a very simple rogue indeed who cheated them. When the lad, after failing in his clerical examination, after failing in his plan for studying the law, took leave of these projects and of his parents, and set out for Edinburgh, he saw mother, and uncle, and lazy Ballymahon, and green native turf, and sparkling river for the last time. He was never to look on old Ireland more, and only in fancy revisit her.

But me not destined such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,  
Impelled, with step unceasing, to pursue  
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;  
That like the circle bounding earth and skies  
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies:  
My fortune leads to traverse realms unknown,  
And find no spot of all the world my own.

I spoke in a former lecture of that high courage which enabled Fielding, in spite of disease, remorse, and poverty, always to retain a cheerful spirit and to keep his manly benevolence and love of truth intact, as if these treasures had been confided to him for the public benefit, and he was accountable to posterity for their honourable

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employ; and a constancy, equally happy and admirable, I think, was shown by Goldsmith, whose sweet and friendly nature bloomed kindly always in the midst of a life's storm, and rain, and bitter weather.<sup>1</sup> The poor fellow was never so friendless but he could befriend some one; never so pinched and wretched but he could give of his crust, and speak his word of compassion. If he had but his flute left, he could give that, and make the children happy in the dreary London court. He could give the coals in that queer coal-scuttle we read of to his poor neighbour: he could give away his blankets in college to the poor widow, and warm himself as he best might in the feathers: he could pawn his coat to save his landlord from gaol: when he was a school-usher, he spent his earnings in treats for the boys, and the good-natured schoolmaster's wife said justly that she ought to keep Mr. Goldsmith's money as well as the young gentlemen's. When he met his pupils in later life, nothing would satisfy the Doctor but he must treat them still. 'Have you seen the print of me after Sir Joshua Reynolds?' he asked of one of his old pupils. 'Not seen it? not bought it? Sure, Jack, if your picture had been published, I'd not have been without it half an hour.' His purse and his heart were everybody's, and his friends' as much as his own. When he was at the height of his reputation, and the Earl of Northumberland, going as Lord Lieutenant to Ireland, asked if he could be of any service to Dr. Goldsmith, Goldsmith recommended his brother, and not himself, to the great man. 'My patrons,' he gallantly said, 'are the booksellers, and I want no others.'<sup>2</sup> Hard patrons they were, and hard work he did;

<sup>1</sup> 'An "inspired idiot", Goldsmith, hangs strangely about him [Johnson] . . . Yet, on the whole, there is no evil in the "gooseberry-fool", but rather much good; of a finer, if of a weaker sort than Johnson's; and all the more genuine that he himself could never become *conscious* of it, though unhappily never cease attempting to become so: the author of the genuine *Vicar of Wakefield*, nill he will he, must needs fly towards such a mass of genuine manhood.'—CARLYLE'S *Essays* (2nd ed.), vol. iv, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> 'At present, the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the



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but he did not complain much: if in his early writings some bitter words escaped him, some allusions to neglect and poverty, he withdrew these expressions when his works were re-published, and better days seemed to open for him; and he did not care to complain that printer or publisher had overlooked his merit, or left him poor. The Court face was turned from honest Oliver, the Court patronized Beattie; the fashion did not shine on him—fashion adored Sterne.<sup>1</sup> Fashion pronounced Kelly to be

public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and a generous master. It is indeed too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favour; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance indeed may be forced for a time into reputation, but, destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

‘A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune: and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity.’—GOLDSMITH, *Citizen of the World*, Let. 84.

<sup>1</sup> Goldsmith attacked Sterne, obviously enough, censuring his indecency, and slighting his wit, and ridiculing his manner, in the 53rd letter in the *Citizen of the World*.

‘As in common conversation,’ says he, ‘the best way to make the audience laugh is by first laughing yourself; so in writing, the properest manner is to show an attempt at humour, which will pass upon most for humour in reality. To effect this, readers must be treated with the most perfect familiarity; in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next to pull them by the nose; he must talk in riddles, and then send them to bed in order to dream for the solution,’ etc.

Sterne’s humorous *mot* on the subject of the gravest part of the charges, then, as now, made against him, may perhaps be quoted here, from the excellent, the respectable Sir Walter Scott.

‘Soon after *Tristram* had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition, whether she had read his book. “I have not, Mr. Sterne,” was the answer; “and to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal.” “My dear good lady,” replied the author, “do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there” (pointing to a

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the great writer of comedy of his day. A little—not ill humour, but plaintiveness—a little betrayal of wounded pride which he showed render him not the less amiable. The author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* had a right to protest when Newbery kept back the MS. for two years; had a right to be a little peevish with Sterne; a little angry when Colman's actors declined their parts in his delightful comedy, when the manager refused to have a scene painted for it, and pronounced its damnation before hearing. He had not the great public with him; but he had the noble Johnson, and the admirable Reynolds, and the great Gibbon, and the great Burke, and the great Fox—friends and admirers illustrious indeed, as famous as those who, fifty years before, sat round Pope's table.

Nobody knows, and I dare say Goldsmith's buoyant temper kept no account of all the pains which he endured during the early period of his literary career. Should any man of letters in our day have to bear up against such, Heaven grant he may come out of the period of misfortune with such a pure kind heart as that which Goldsmith obstinately bore in his breast. The insults to which he had to submit are shocking to read of—slander, contumely, vulgar satire, brutal malignity perverting his commonest motives and actions: he had his share of these, and one's anger is roused at reading of them, as it is at seeing a woman insulted or a child assaulted, at the notion that a creature so very gentle and weak, and full of love, should have had to suffer so. And he had worse than insult to undergo—to own to fault, and deprecate the anger of ruffians. There is a letter of his extant to one Griffiths, a bookseller, in which poor Goldsmith is forced to confess that certain books sent by Griffiths are in the hands of a friend from whom Goldsmith had been forced to borrow money. 'He was wild, sir,' Johnson said, speaking of Goldsmith to

child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics): "he shows at times a good deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence."

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Boswell, with his great, wise benevolence and noble mercifulness of heart, 'Dr. Goldsmith was wild, sir ; but he is so no more.' Ah ! if we pity the good and weak man who suffers undeservedly, let us deal very gently with him from whom misery extorts not only tears, but shame ; let us think humbly and charitably of the human nature that suffers so sadly and falls so low. Whose turn may it be to-morrow ? What weak heart, confident before trial, may not succumb under temptation invincible ? Cover the good man who has been vanquished—cover his face and pass on.

For the last half-dozen years of his life, Goldsmith was far removed from the pressure of any ignoble necessity : and in the receipt, indeed of a pretty large income from the booksellers, his patrons. Had he lived but a few years more, his public fame would have been as great as his private reputation, and he might have enjoyed alive a part of that esteem which his country has ever since paid to the vivid and versatile genius who has touched on almost every subject of literature, and touched nothing that he did not adorn. Except in rare instances, a man is known in our profession, and esteemed as a skilful workman, years before the lucky hit which trebles his usual gains, and stamps him a popular author. In the strength of his age, and the dawn of his reputation, having for backers and friends the most illustrious literary men of his time,<sup>1</sup> fame and prosperity might have been in store for Goldsmith, had fate so willed it ; and, at forty-six, had not sudden

<sup>1</sup> ' Goldsmith told us that he was now busy in writing a *Natural History* ; and that he might have full leisure for it, he had taken lodgings at a farmer's house, near to the six-mile stone in the Edgware Road, and had carried down his books in two returned post-chaises. He said he believed the farmer's family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children ; he was *The Gentleman*. Mr. Mickle, the translator of the *Lusiad*, and I, went to visit him at this place a few days afterwards. He was not at home ; but having a curiosity to see his apartment, we went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled upon the wall with a blacklead pencil.'—BOSWELL.

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disease carried him off, I say prosperity rather than competence, for it is probable that no sum could have put order into his affairs or sufficed for his irreclaimable habits of dissipation. It must be remembered that he owed 2,000*l.* when he died. 'Was ever poet,' Johnson asked, 'so trusted before?' As has been the case with many another good fellow of his nation, his life was tracked and his substance wasted by crowds of hungry beggars, and lazy dependants. If they came at a lucky time (and be sure they knew his affairs better than he did himself, and watched his pay-day), he gave them of his money: if they begged on empty-purse days, he gave them his promissory bills: or he treated them to a tavern where he had credit; or he obliged them with an order upon honest Mr. Filby for coats, for which he paid as long as he could earn, and until the shears of Filby were to cut for him no more. Staggering under a load of debt and labour, tracked by bailiffs and reproachful creditors, running from a hundred poor dependants, whose appealing looks were perhaps the hardest of all pains for him to bear, devising fevered plans for the morrow, new histories, new comedies, all sorts of new literary schemes, flying from all these into seclusion, and out of seclusion into pleasure—at last, at five-and-forty, death seized him and closed his career.<sup>1</sup> I have been many a time in the chambers in the Temple which were his, and passed up the staircase, which Johnson, and Burke, and Reynolds trod to see their friend, their poet, their kind Goldsmith—the stair on which the poor women sat weeping bitterly when they heard that the greatest and most generous of all men was dead within

<sup>1</sup> 'When Goldsmith was dying, Dr. Turton said to him, "Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have; is your mind at ease?" Goldsmith answered it was not.'--DR. JOHNSON (*in Boswell*).

'Chambers, you find, is gone far, and poor Goldsmith is gone much farther. He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money and squandered it, by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his failings be remembered; he was a very great man.'--DR. JOHNSON to Boswell, July 5th, 1774.

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the black oak door.<sup>1</sup> Ah, it was a different lot from that for which the poor fellow sighed, when he wrote with heart yearning for home those most charming of all fond verses, in which he fancies he revisits Auburn—

Here as I take my solitary rounds,  
Amidst thy tangled walks and ruined grounds,  
And, many a year elapsed, return to view  
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,  
Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,  
Swells at my heart, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share,  
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;  
To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose ;  
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—  
Amidst the swains to show my book -learned skill,  
Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
And tell of all I felt and all I saw ;  
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew  
I still had hopes—my long vexations past,  
Here to return, and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline !  
Retreats from care that never must be mine—  
How blest is he who crowns in shades like these,  
A youth of labour with an age of ease ;  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !  
For him no wretches born to work and weep  
Explore the mine or tempt the dangerous deep ;

<sup>1</sup> When Burke was told [of Goldsmith's death] he burst into tears. Reynolds was in his painting-room when the messenger went to him ; but at once he laid his pencil aside, which in times of great family distress he had not been known to do, left his painting room, and did not re-enter it that day. . . .

'The staircase of Brick Court is said to have been filled with mourners, the reverse of domestic ; women without a home, without domesticity of any kind, with no friend but him they had come to weep for ; outcasts of that great, solitary, wicked city, to whom he had never forgotten to be kind and charitable. And he had domestic mourners, too. His coffin was reopened at the request of Miss Horneck and her sister (such was the regard he was known to have for them !) that a lock might be cut from his hair. It was in Mrs. Gwyn's possession when she died, after nearly seventy years.'—FORSTER'S *Goldsmith*.

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- No surly porter stands in guilty state  
To spurn imploring famine from his gate :  
But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;  
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,  
Whilst resignation gently slopes the way ;  
And all his prospects brightening at the last,  
His heaven commences ere the world be past.

In these verses, I need not say with what melody, with what touching truth, with what exquisite beauty of comparison—as indeed in hundreds more pages of the writings of this honest soul—the whole character of the man is told—his humble confession of faults and weakness ; his pleasant little vanity, and desire that his village should admire him ; his simple scheme of good in which everybody was to be happy—no beggar was to be refused his dinner—nobody in fact was to work much, and he to be the harmless chief of the Utopia, and the monarch of the Irish Yvetôt. He would have told again, and without fear of their failing, those famous jokes<sup>1</sup> which had hung fire in London ; he would have

<sup>1</sup> ' Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage, as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was everywhere paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. " Sir," said he, " you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic."

' He was still more mortified, when, talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all present, a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, " Stay, stay—Toctor Shonson is going to zay something." This was no doubt very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

' It may also be observed that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but upon occasions would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends, as Beauclerk, Beau ; Boswell, Bozzy. . . I remember one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson

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talked of his great friends of the Club—of my Lord Clare and my Lord Bishop, my Lord Nugent—sure he knew them intimately, and was hand and glove with some of the best men in town—and he would have spoken of Johnson and of Burke, from Cork, and of Sir Joshua who had painted him—and he would have told wonderful sly stories of Ranelagh and the Pantheon, and the masquerades at Madame Cornelys'; and he would have toasted, with a sigh, the Jessamy Bride—the lovely Mary Horneck.

The figure of that charming young lady forms one of the prettiest recollections of Goldsmith's life. She and her beautiful sister, who married Bunbury, the graceful

said—"We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy's* play," Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, "I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*."

This is one of several of Boswell's depreciatory mentions of Goldsmith—which may well irritate biographers and admirers—and also those who take that more kindly and more profound view of Boswell's own character, which was opened up by Mr. Carlyle's famous article on his book. No wonder that Mr. Irving calls Boswell an 'incarnation of toadyism'. And the worst of it is, that Johnson himself has suffered from this habit of the Laird of Auchinleck's. People are apt to forget under what Boswellian stimulus the great Doctor uttered many hasty things:—things no more indicative of the nature of the depths of his character than the phosphoric gleaming of the sea, when struck at night, is indicative of radical corruption of nature! In truth, it is clear enough on the whole that both Johnson and Goldsmith *appreciated* each other, and that they mutually knew it. They were, as it were, tripped up and flung against each other, occasionally, by the blundering and silly gambolling of people in company.

Something must be allowed for Boswell's 'rivalry for Johnson's good graces' with Oliver (as Sir Walter Scott has remarked), for Oliver was intimate with the Doctor before his biographer was,—and as we all remember, marched off with him to 'take tea with Mrs. Williams' before Boswell had advanced to that honourable degree of intimacy. But, in truth, Boswell—though he perhaps showed more talent in his delineation of the Doctor than is generally ascribed to him—had not faculty to take a fair view of *two* great men at a time. Besides, as Mr. Forster justly remarks, 'he was impatient of Goldsmith from the first hour of their acquaintance.'—*Life and Adventures*, p. 292.

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and humorous amateur artist of those days, when Gilray had but just begun to try his powers, were among the kindest and dearest of Goldsmith's many friends, cheered and pitied him, travelled abroad with him, made him welcome at their home, and gave him many a pleasant holiday. He bought his finest clothes to figure at their country house at Barton—he wrote them droll verses. They loved him, laughed at him, played him tricks and made him happy. He asked for a loan from Garrick, and Garrick kindly supplied him, to enable him to go to Barton—but there were to be no more holidays, and only one brief struggle more for poor Goldsmith—a lock of his hair was taken from the coffin and given to the Jessamy Bride. She lived quite into our time. Hazlitt saw her an old lady, but beautiful still, in Northcote's painting-room, who told the eager critic how proud she always was that Goldsmith had admired her. The younger Colman has left a touching reminiscence of him (vol. i, 63, 64).

‘I was only five years old,’ he says, ‘when Goldsmith took me on his knee one evening whilst he was drinking coffee with my father, and began to play with me, which amiable act I returned, with the ingratitude of a peevish brat, by giving him a very smart slap on the face: it must have been a tingler, for it left the marks of my spiteful paw on his cheek. This infantile outrage was followed by summary justice, and I was locked up by my indignant father in an adjoining room to undergo solitary imprisonment in the dark. Here I began to howl and scream most abominably, which was no bad step towards my liberation, since those who were not inclined to pity me might be likely to set me free for the purpose of abating a nuisance.

‘At length a generous friend appeared to extricate me from jeopardy, and that generous friend was no other than the man I had so wantonly molested by assault and battery—it was the tender-hearted Doctor himself, with a lighted candle in his hand, and a smile upon his countenance, which was still partially red from the effects of my petulance. I sulked and sobbed as he



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fondled and soothed, till I began to brighten. Goldsmith seized the propitious moment of returning good humour, when he put down the candle and began to conjure. He placed three hats, which happened to be in the room, and a shilling under each. The shillings he told me were England, France, and Spain. "Hey presto cockalorum!" cried the Doctor, and lo, on uncovering the shillings, which had been dispersed each beneath a separate hat, they were all found congregated under one. I was no politician at five years old, and therefore might not have wondered at the sudden revolution which brought England, France, and Spain all under one crown; but, as also I was no conjurer, it amazed me beyond measure. . . . From that time, whenever the Doctor came to visit my father, "I plucked his gown to share the good man's smile"; a game at romps constantly ensued, and we were always cordial friends and merry playfellows. Our unequal companionship varied somewhat as to sports as I grew older; but it did not last long: my senior playmate died in his forty-fifth year, when I had attained my eleventh. . . . In all the numerous accounts of his virtues and foibles, his genius and absurdities, his knowledge of nature and ignorance of the world, his "compassion for another's woe" was always predominant; and my trivial story of his humouring a froward child weighs but as a feather in the recorded scale of his benevolence.'

Think of him reckless, thriftless, vain if you like—but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. He passes out of our life, and goes to render his account beyond it. Think of the poor pensioners weeping at his grave; think of the noble spirits that admired and deplored him; think of the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph—and of the wonderful and unanimous response of affection with which the world has paid back the love he gave it. His humour delighting us still: his song fresh and beautiful as when first he charmed with it: his words in all our mouths: his very weaknesses beloved and familiar—his benevolent spirit seems still to smile upon us: to do gentle kindnesses: to succour with sweet

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charity : to soothe, caress, and forgive : to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor.

His name is the last in the list of those men of humour who have formed the themes of the discourses which you have heard so kindly.

Long before I had ever hoped for such an audience, or dreamed of the possibility of the good fortune which has brought me so many friends, I was at issue with some of my literary brethren upon a point—which they held from tradition I think rather than experience—that our profession was neglected in this country ; and that men of letters were ill-received and held in slight esteem. It would hardly be grateful of me now to alter my old opinion that we do meet with goodwill and kindness, with generous helping hands in the time of our necessity, with cordial and friendly recognition. What claim had any one of these of whom I have been speaking, but genius ? What return of gratitude, fame, affection, did it not bring to all ?

What punishment befell those who were unfortunate among them, but that which follows reckless habits and careless lives ? For these faults a wit must suffer like the dullest prodigal that ever ran in debt. He must pay the tailor if he wears the coat ; his children must go in rags if he spends his money at the tavern ; he can't come to London and be made Lord Chancellor if he stops on the road and gambles away his last shilling at Dublin. And he must pay the social penalty of these follies too, and expect that the world will shun the man of bad habits, that women will avoid the man of loose life, that prudent folks will close their doors as a precaution, and before a demand should be made on their pockets by the needy prodigal. With what difficulty had any one of these men to contend, save that eternal and mechanical one of want of means and lack of capital, and of which thousands of young lawyers, young doctors, young soldiers and sailors, of inventors, manufacturers, shopkeepers, have to complain ? Hearts as brave and resolute as ever beat in the breast of any wit or poet, sicken and break daily in the vain endeavour and unavailing struggle against

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life's difficulty. Don't we see daily ruined inventors, grey-haired midshipmen, balked heroes, blighted curates, barristers pining a hungry life out in chambers, the attorneys never mounting to their garrets, whilst scores of them are rapping at the door of the successful quack below? If these suffer, who is the author, that he should be exempt? Let us bear our ills with the same constancy with which others endure them, accept our manly part in life, hold our own, and ask no more. I can conceive of no kings or laws causing or curing Goldsmith's improvidence, or Fielding's fatal love of pleasure, or Dick Steele's mania for running races with the constable. You never can outrun that sure-footed officer—not by any swiftness or by dodges devised by any genius, however great; and he carries off the Tatler to the spunging-house, or taps the Citizen of the World on the shoulder as he would any other mortal.

Does society look down on a man because he is an author? I suppose if people want a buffoon they tolerate him only in so far as he is amusing; it can hardly be expected that they should respect him as an equal. Is there to be a guard of honour provided for the author of the last new novel or poem? how long is he to reign, and keep other potentates out of possession? He retires, grumbles, and prints a lamentation that literature is despised. If Captain A. is left out of Lady B.'s parties, he does not state that the army is despised: if Lord C. no longer asks Counsellor D. to dinner, Counsellor D. does not announce that the Bar is insulted. He is not fair to society if he enters it with this suspicion hankering about him; if he is doubtful about his reception, how hold up his head honestly, and look frankly in the face that world about which he is full of suspicion? Is he place-hunting, and thinking in his mind that he ought to be made an Ambassador, like Prior, or a Secretary of State, like Addison? his pretence of equality falls to the ground at once: he is scheming for a patron, not shaking the hand of a friend, when he meets the world. Treat such a man as he deserves; laugh at his buffoonery, and give him a dinner

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and a *bon jour* ; laugh at his self-sufficiency and absurd assumptions of superiority, and his equally ludicrous airs of martyrdom : laugh at his flattery and his scheming, and buy it, if it's worth the having. Let the wag have his dinner and the hireling his pay, if you want him, and make a profound bow to the *grand homme incompris*, and the boisterous martyr, and show him the door. The great world, the great aggregate experience, has its good sense, as it has its good humour. It detects a pretender, as it trusts a loyal heart. It is kind in the main : how should it be otherwise than kind, when it is so wise and clear-headed ? To any literary man who says, ' It despises my profession,' I say, with all my might—no, no, no. It may pass over your individual case—how many a brave fellow has failed in the race, and perished unknown in the struggle !—but it treats you as you merit in the main. If you serve it, it is not unthankful ; if you please it, it is pleased ; if you cringe to it, it detects you, and scorns you if you are mean ; it returns your cheerfulness with its good humour ; it deals not ungenerously with your weaknesses ; it recognizes most kindly your merits ; it gives you a fair place and fair play. To any one of those men of whom we have spoken was it in the main ungrateful ? A king might refuse Goldsmith a pension, as a publisher might keep his masterpiece and the delight of all the world in his desk for two years ; but it was mistake, and not ill will. Noble and illustrious names of Swift, and Pope, and Addison ! dear and honoured memories of Goldsmith and Fielding ! kind friends, teachers, benefactors ! who shall say that our country, which continues to bring you such an unceasing tribute of applause, admiration, love, sympathy, does not do honour to the literary calling in the honour which it bestows upon *you* !

## *Frederic the Great*

LORD MACAULAY

**F**REDERIC THE GREAT had, from the commencement of his reign, applied himself to public business after a fashion unknown among kings. Louis the Fourteenth, indeed, had been his own prime minister, and had exercised a general superintendence over all the departments of the government; but this was not sufficient for Frederic. He was not content with being his own prime minister: he would be his own sole minister. Under him there was no room, not merely for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, but for a Colbert, a Louvois, or a Torcy. A love of labour for its own sake, a restless and insatiable longing to dictate, to intermeddle, to make his power felt, a profound scorn and distrust of his fellow creatures, made him unwilling to ask counsel, to confide important secrets, to delegate ample powers. The highest functionaries under his government were mere clerks, and were not so much trusted by him as valuable clerks are often trusted by the heads of departments. He was his own treasurer, his own commander-in-chief, his own intendant of public works, his own minister for trade and justice, for home affairs and foreign affairs, his own master of the horse, steward, and chamberlain. Matters of which no chief of an office in any other government would ever hear were, in this singular monarchy, decided by the King in person. If a traveller wished for a good place to see a review, he had to write to Frederic, and received next day, from a royal messenger, Frederic's answer signed by Frederic's own hand. This was an extravagant, a morbid activity. The public business would assuredly have been better done if each department had been put under a man of talents and integrity, and if the King had contented himself with a general

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control. In this manner the advantages which belong to unity of design, and the advantages which belong to the division of labour, would have been to a great extent combined. But such a system would not have suited the peculiar temper of Frederic. He could tolerate no will, no reason, in the state, save his own. He wished for no abler assistance than that of penmen who had just understanding enough to translate and transcribe, to make out his scrawls, and to put his concise Yes and No into an official form. Of the higher intellectual faculties, there is as much in a copying machine, or a lithographic press, as he required from a secretary of the cabinet.

His own exertions were such as were hardly to be expected from a human body or a human mind. At Potsdam, his ordinary residence, he rose at three in summer and four in winter. A page soon appeared, with a large basket full of all the letters which had arrived for the King by the last courier, dispatches from ambassadors, reports from officers of revenue, plans of buildings, proposals for draining marshes, complaints from persons who thought themselves aggrieved, applications from persons who wanted titles, military commissions, and civil situations. He examined the seals with a keen eye; for he was never for a moment free from the suspicion that some fraud might be practised on him. Then he read the letters, divided them into several packets, and signified his pleasure, generally by a mark, often by two or three words, now and then by some cutting epigram. By eight he had generally finished this part of his task. The adjutant-general was then in attendance, and received instructions for the day as to all the military arrangements of the kingdom. Then the King went to review his guards, not as kings ordinarily review their guards, but with the minute attention and severity of an old drill-sergeant. In the meantime the four cabinet secretaries had been employed in answering the letters on which the King had that morning signified his will. These unhappy men were forced to work all the year round like negro slaves in the time of the

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sugarcrop. They never had a holiday. They never knew what it was to dine. It was necessary that, before they stirred, they should finish the whole of their work. The King, always on his guard against treachery, took from the heap a handful of letters at random, and looked into them to see whether his instructions had been exactly followed. This was no bad security against foul play on the part of the secretaries ; for if one of them were detected in a trick, he might think himself fortunate if he escaped with five years of imprisonment in a dungeon. Frederic then signed the replies, and all were sent off the same evening.

The general principles on which this strange government was conducted, deserve attention. The policy of Frederic was essentially the same as his father's ; but Frederic, while he carried that policy to lengths to which his father never thought of carrying it, cleared it at the same time from the absurdities with which his father had encumbered it. The King's first object was to have a great, efficient, and well-trained army. He had a kingdom which in extent and population was hardly in the second rank of European powers ; and yet he aspired to a place not inferior to that of the sovereigns of England, France and Austria. For that end it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting. Louis the Fifteenth, with five times as many subjects as Frederic, and more than five times as large a revenue, had not a more formidable army. The proportion which the soldiers in Prussia bore to the people seems hardly credible. Of the males in the vigour of life, a seventh part were probably under arms ; and this great force had, by drilling, by reviewing, and by the unsparing use of cane and scourge, been taught to perform all evolutions with a rapidity and a precision which would have astonished Villars or Eugene. The elevated feelings which are necessary to the best kind of army were then wanting to the Prussian service. In those ranks were not found the religious and political enthusiasm which inspired the pikemen of Cromwell, the patriotic ardour, the thirst of glory, the devotion to a great leader, which inflamed the Old Guard of Napoleon.

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But in all the mechanical parts of the military calling, the Prussians were as superior to the English and French troops of that day as the English and French troops to a rustic militia.

Though the pay of the Prussian soldier was small, though every rix-dollar of extraordinary charge was scrutinized by Frederic with a vigilance and suspicion such as Mr. Joseph Hume never brought to the examination of an army estimate, the expense of such an establishment was, for the means of the country, enormous. In order that it might not be utterly ruinous, it was necessary that every other expense should be cut down to the lowest possible point. Accordingly Frederic, though his dominions bordered on the sea, had no navy. He neither had nor wished to have colonies. His judges, his fiscal officers, were meanly paid. His ministers at foreign courts walked on foot, or drove shabby old carriages till the axle-trees gave way. Even to his highest diplomatic agents, who resided at London and Paris, he allowed less than a thousand pounds sterling a year. The royal household was managed with a frugality unusual in the establishments of opulent subjects, unexampled in any other palace. The King loved good eating and drinking, and during great part of his life took pleasure in seeing his table surrounded by guests ; yet the whole charge of his kitchen was brought within the sum of two thousand pounds sterling a year. He examined every extraordinary item with a care which might be thought to suit the mistress of a boarding-house better than a great prince. When more than four rix-dollars were asked of him for a hundred oysters, he stormed as if he had heard that one of his generals had sold a fortress to the Empress Queen. Not a bottle of Champagne was uncorked without his express order. The game of the royal parks and forests, a serious head of expenditure in most kingdoms, was to him a source of profit. The whole was farmed out ; and though the farmers were almost ruined by their contract, the King would grant them no remission. His wardrobe consisted of one fine gala dress, which lasted him all his life ; of



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two or three old coats fit for Monmouth Street, of yellow waistcoats soiled with snuff, and of huge boots embrowned by time. One taste alone sometimes allured him beyond the limits of parsimony, nay, even beyond the limits of prudence, the taste for building. In all other things his economy was such as we might call by a harsher name, if we did not reflect that his funds were drawn from a heavily taxed people, and that it was impossible for him, without excessive tyranny, to keep up at once a formidable army and a splendid court.

Considered as an administrator, Frederic had undoubtedly many titles to praise. Order was strictly maintained throughout his dominions. Property was secure. A great liberty of speaking and of writing was allowed. Confident in the irresistible strength derived from a great army, the King looked down on malcontents and libellers with a wise disdain; and gave little encouragement to spies and informers. When he was told of the disaffection of one of his subjects, he merely asked, 'How many thousand men can he bring into the field?' He once saw a crowd staring at something on a wall. He rode up and found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederic ordered his attendants to take it down and put it lower. 'My people and I', he said, 'have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please.' No person would have dared to publish in London satires on George the Second approaching to the atrocity of those satires on Frederic, which the booksellers at Berlin sold with impunity. One bookseller sent to the palace a copy of the most stinging lampoon that perhaps was ever written in the world, the *Memoirs of Voltaire*, published by Beaumarchais, and asked for His Majesty's orders. 'Do not advertise it in an offensive manner,' said the King; 'but sell it by all means. I hope it will pay you well.' Even among statesmen accustomed to the licence of a free press, such steadfastness of mind as this is not very common.

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It is due also to the memory of Frederic to say that he earnestly laboured to secure to his people the great blessing of cheap and speedy justice. He was one of the first rulers who abolished the cruel and absurd practice of torture. No sentence of death, pronounced by the ordinary tribunals, was executed without his sanction; and his sanction, except in cases of murder, was rarely given. Towards his troops he acted in a very different manner. Military offences were punished with such barbarous scourging that to be shot was considered by the Prussian soldier as a secondary punishment. Indeed, the principle which pervaded Frederic's whole policy was this, that the more severely the army is governed, the safer it is to treat the rest of the community with lenity.

Religious persecution was unknown under his government, unless some foolish and unjust restrictions which lay upon the Jews may be regarded as forming an exception. His policy with respect to the Catholics of Silesia presented an honourable contrast to the policy which, under very similar circumstances, England long followed with respect to the Catholics of Ireland. Every form of religion and irreligion found an asylum in his states. The scoffer whom the parliaments of France had sentenced to a cruel death, was consoled by a commission in the Prussian service. The Jesuit who could show his face nowhere else, who in Britain was still subject to penal laws, who was proscribed by France, Spain, Portugal, and Naples, who had been given up even by the Vatican, found safety and the means of subsistence in the Prussian dominions.

Most of the vices of Frederic's administration resolve themselves into one vice, the spirit of meddling. The indefatigable activity of his intellect, his dictatorial temper, his military habits, all inclined him to this great fault. He drilled his people as he drilled his grenadiers. Capital and industry were diverted from their natural direction by a crowd of preposterous regulations. There was a monopoly of coffee, a monopoly of tobacco, a monopoly of refined sugar. The public money, of which the King was generally so sparing, was lavishly spent in

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ploughing bogs, in planting mulberry trees amidst the sand, in bringing sheep from Spain to improve the Saxon wool, in bestowing prizes for fine yarn, in building manufactories of porcelain, manufactories of carpets, manufactories of hardware, manufactories of lace. Neither the experience of other rulers, nor his own, could ever teach him that something more than an edict and a grant of public money was required to create a Lyons, a Brussels, or a Birmingham.

For his commercial policy, however, there was some excuse. He had on his side illustrious examples and popular prejudice. Grievously as he erred, he erred in company with his age. In other departments his meddling was altogether without apology. He interfered with the course of justice as well as with the course of trade ; and set up his own crude notions of equity against the law as expounded by the unanimous voice of the gravest magistrates. It never occurred to him that men whose lives were passed in adjudicating on questions of civil right were more likely to form correct opinions on such questions than a prince whose attention was divided among a thousand objects, and who had never read a law-book through. The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his Chancellor. He kicked the shins of his Judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right, and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant ; but to be ruled by a busybody is more than human nature can bear.

The same passion for directing and regulating appeared in every part of the King's policy. Every lad of a certain station in life was forced to go to certain schools within the Prussian dominions. If a young Prussian repaired, though but for a few weeks, to Leyden or Gottingen for the purpose of study, the offence was punished with civil disabilities, and sometimes with the confiscation of property. Nobody was to travel without the royal

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permission. If the permission were granted, the pocket-money of the tourist was fixed by royal ordinance. A merchant might take with him two hundred and fifty rix-dollars in gold, a noble was allowed to take four hundred ; for it may be observed, in passing, that Frederic studiously kept up the old distinction between the nobles and the community. In speculation, he was a French philosopher, but in action, a German prince. He talked and wrote about the privileges of blood in the style of Si  yes ; but in practice no chapter in the empire looked with a keener eye to genealogies and quarterings.

Such was Frederic the Ruler. But there was another Frederic, the Frederic of Rheinsberg, the fiddler and flute-player, the poetaster and metaphysician. Amidst the cares of state the King had retained his passion for music, for reading, for writing, for literary society. To these amusements he devoted all the time that he could snatch from the business of war and government ; and perhaps more light is thrown on his character by what passed during his hours of relaxation, than by his battles or his laws. Frederic loved to spend the time which he could steal from public cares with those by whom he might be amused, and whom he might despise. He wished his supper-parties to be gay and easy. He invited his guests to lay aside all restraint, and to forget that he was at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers, and was absolute master of the life and liberty of all who sat at meat with him. There was, therefore, at these parties the outward show of ease. The wit and learning of the company were ostentatiously displayed. The discussions on history and literature were often highly interesting. But the absurdity of all the religions known among men was the chief topic of conversation ; and the audacity with which doctrines and names venerated throughout Christendom were treated on these occasions startled even persons accustomed to the society of French and English free-thinkers. Real liberty, however, or real affection, was in this brilliant society not to be found. Absolute kings seldom have friends : and Frederic's faults were such as,

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even where perfect equality exists, make friendship exceedingly precarious. He had indeed many qualities which, on a first acquaintance, were captivating. His conversation was lively ; his manners, to those whom he desired to please, were even caressing. No man could flatter with more delicacy. No man succeeded more completely in inspiring those who approached him with vague hopes of some great advantage from his kindness. But under this fair exterior he was a tyrant, suspicious, disdainful, and malevolent. He had one taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which, when habitually and deliberately indulged by a man of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart, a taste for severe practical jokes. If a courtier was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriacal, he was made to believe that he had the dropsy. If he had particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither. These things, it may be said, are trifles. They are so ; but they are indications, not to be mistaken, of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

Frederic had a keen eye for the foibles of others, and loved to communicate his discoveries. He had some talent for sarcasm, and considerable skill in detecting the sore places where sarcasm would be most acutely felt. His vanity, as well as his malignity, found gratification in the vexation and confusion of those who smarted under his caustic jests. Yet in truth his success on these occasions belonged quite as much to the king as to the wit. We read that Commodus descended, sword in hand, into the arena, against a wretched gladiator, armed only with a foil of lead, and, after shedding the blood of the helpless victim, struck medals to commemorate the inglorious victory. The triumphs of Frederic in the war of repartee were of much the same kind. How to deal with him was the most puzzling of questions. To appear constrained in his presence was to disobey his commands,

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and to spoil his amusement. Yet if his associates were enticed by his graciousness to indulge in the familiarity of a cordial intimacy, he was certain to make them repent of their presumption by some cruel humiliation. To resent his affronts was perilous; yet not to resent them was to deserve and to invite them. In his view, those who mutinied were insolent and ungrateful; those who submitted were curs made to receive bones and kickings with the same fawning patience. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how anything short of the rage of hunger should have induced men to bear the misery of being the associates of the Great King. It was no lucrative post. His Majesty was as severe and economical in his friendships as in the other charges of his establishment, and as unlikely to give a rix-dollar too much for his guests as for his dinners. The sum which he allowed to a poet or a philosopher was the very smallest sum for which such poet or philosopher could be induced to sell himself into slavery; and the bondsman might think himself fortunate, if what had been so grudgingly given was not, after years of suffering, rudely and arbitrarily withdrawn.

Potsdam was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina. At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited the happy adventurer. Every new-comer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long succession of favourites who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early, and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonoured old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and

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a skewer for a shirtpin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederic's court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight, and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country. His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants. Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slyly depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly, and with violent outrage, made war on Rousseau. Nor had he the art of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good humour or of contempt. With all his great talents, and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child, or a hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified, he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words, his stamping and cursing, his grimaces and his tears of rage, were a rich feast to those abject natures, whose delight is in the agonies of powerful spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one walk, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the great men whose dust made the holy precinct of Port Royal holier, no tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, and of *Mérope*. At length a rival was announced. Oid Crébillon, who, many years before, had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters, and of a capricious populace. A thing called *Catiline*, which he had written in his retirement, was

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acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece, it is sufficient to say that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudery, between Catiline, whose confidant is the Praetor Lentulus, and Tullia, the daughter of Cicero. The theatre resounded with acclamations. The King pensioned the successful poet; and the coffee-houses pronounced that Voltaire was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, that the celestial fire which had glowed in Corneille and Racine, was to be found in Crébillon alone.

The blow went to Voltaire's heart. He determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters, couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederic seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honourable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof were offered in return for the pleasure and honour which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank, had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order to enable him to bring his niece, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal King. The answer was a dry refusal. 'I did not,' said His Majesty, 'solicit the honour of the lady's society.' On this, Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. 'Was there ever such avarice? He has hundreds of tubs full of dollars in his vaults, and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis.' It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off; but Frederic, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard



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D'Arnaud. His Majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that D'Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt, danced about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connexion which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of near thirty years, he returned bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris, that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description, that the King was the most amiable of men, that Potsdam was the paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received, together with his gold key, the cross of an order, and a patent ensuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived, when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia. Frederic, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meagre hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title, derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus :—Frederic, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amidst the delights of the honeymoon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival, he could not help telling his niece that the amiable King had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand, while patting and stroking with the other.

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Soon came hints not the less alarming, because mysterious. 'The supper parties are delicious. The King is the life of the company. But—I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But—but—Berlin is fine, the princesses charming, the maids of honour handsome. But'——

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederic was frugal, almost niggardly. When he had secured his plaything, he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of imprudence and knavery; and conceived that the favourite of a monarch who had barrels full of gold and silver laid up in cellars ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry; and a war began, in which Frederic stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate, that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact, that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax-candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extraordinary associates. The sarcasms of the King soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Métrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederic, that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who

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had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unassailable by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the Archangel :

I forewarn thee, shun  
His deadly arrow : neither vainly hope  
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,  
Though temper'd heavenly ; for that fatal dint,  
Save Him who reigns above, none can resist.

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem ; how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain ; how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose of destroying the last solace of earthly misery, and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration, the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. This is not the place for a full character of Voltaire.

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money, and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stockjobbing, became implicated in transactions of at least a dubious character. The King was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest ; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war with the other men of letters who surrounded the King ; and this irritated Frederic, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame : for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage

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which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His Majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederic, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned, with remarks and corrections. 'See', exclaimed Voltaire, 'what a quantity of his dirty linen the King has sent me to wash!' Talebearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear; and Frederic was as much incensed as a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the *Dunciad*.

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, produced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederic's goodwill as any man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin; and he stood second to Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at the Prussian Court. Frederic had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vainglorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark, a mark never to be effaced, on the forehead of Maupertuis, and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous *Diatribes of Doctor Akakia*. He showed this little piece to Frederic, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the centre of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederic was diverted by this charming pastquinade, he was unwilling that it

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should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron, be in some degree compromised? The King, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress this performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The *Diatrise* was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The King stormed. Voltaire, with his usual disregard of truth, asserted his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The King was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the King his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable; and Voltaire took his leave of Frederic for ever. They parted with cold civility; but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the King's poetry, and forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not, we are confident, for the halt of Frederic's kingdom, have consented to father Frederic's verses. The King, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favourite compositions were in the hands of an enemy, as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He, conceived himself

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secure from the power of his late master, when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had, no doubt, been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent jailers. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not to be attributed to the King. Was anybody punished for it? Was anybody called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederic's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge, charging them at the same time to take their measures in such a way that his name might not be compromised? He acted thus towards Count Bruhl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French government had taken offence at his journey to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Lemán. There, loosed from every tie which had hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly, was eminently true of this its great forerunner: Voltaire could not build: he could only pull down: he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name, not a single addition to the stock of our positive

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knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods, of things noble and things base, of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature, the pleasure or vindicating innocence which had no other helper, of repairing cruel wrongs, of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing terrified Capuchins call him the Anti-christ. But whether employed in works of benevolence, or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort ; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand.

## Poetry

CARDINAL NEWMAN

POETRY, according to Aristotle, is a representation of the ideal. Biography and history represent individual characters and actual facts; poetry, on the contrary, generalizing from the phenomena of nature and life, supplies us with pictures drawn not after an existing pattern, but after a creation of the mind. *Fidelity* is the primary merit of biography and history; the essence of poetry is *fiction*. *Poesis nihil aliud est* (says Bacon) *quam historiae imitatio ad placitum*. It delineates that perfection which the imagination suggests, and to which as a limit the present system of divine Providence actually tends. Moreover, by confining the attention to one series of events and scene of action, it bounds and finishes off the confused luxuriance of real nature; while, by a skilful adjustment of circumstances, it brings into sight the connexion of cause and effect, completes the dependence of the parts one on another, and harmonizes the proportions of the whole. It is then but the type and model of history or biography, if we may be allowed the comparison, bearing some resemblance to the abstract mathematical formula of physics, before it is modified by the contingencies of gravity and friction. Hence, while it recreates the imagination by the superhuman loveliness of its views, it provides a solace for the mind broken by the disappointments and sufferings of actual life; and becomes, moreover, the utterance of the inward emotions of a right moral feeling, seeking a purity and a truth which this world will not give.

It follows that the poetical mind is one full of the eternal forms of beauty and perfection; these are its material of thought, its instrument and medium of observation—these colour each object to which it directs its view. It



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is called imaginative or creative, from the originality and independence of its modes of thinking, compared with the commonplace and matter-of-fact conceptions of ordinary minds, which are fettered down to the particular and individual. At the same time it feels a natural sympathy with everything great and splendid in the physical and moral world ; and selecting such from the mass of common phenomena, incorporates them, as it were, into the substance of its own creations. From living thus in a world of its own, it speaks the language of dignity, emotion, and refinement. Figure is its necessary medium of communication with man ; for in the feebleness of ordinary words to express its ideas, and in the absence of terms of abstract perfection, the adoption of metaphorical language is the only poor means allowed it for imparting to others its intense feelings. A metrical garb has, in all languages, been appropriated to poetry—it is but the outward development of the music and harmony within. The verse, far from being a restraint on the true poet, is the suitable index of his sense, and is adopted by his free and deliberate choice.

We shall presently show the applicability of our doctrine to the various departments of poetical composition ; first, however, it will be right to volunteer an explanation which may save it from much misconception and objection. Let not our notion be thought arbitrarily to limit the number of poets, generally considered such. It will be found to lower particular works, or parts of works, rather than the writers themselves ; sometimes to condemn only the vehicle in which the poetry is conveyed. There is an ambiguity in the word poetry, which is taken to signify both the talent itself, and the written composition which is the result of it. Thus there is an apparent, but no real contradiction, in saying a poem may be but partially poetical ; in some passages more so than in others ; and sometimes not poetical at all. We only maintain—not that writers forfeit the name of poet who fail at times to answer to our requisitions, but—that they are poets only so far forth and inasmuch as they do answer to them. We may grant, for instance,

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that the vulgarities of old Phoenix in the ninth *Iliad*, or of the nurse of Orestes in the *Choephoroe*, or perhaps of the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, are in themselves unworthy of their respective authors, and refer them to the wantonness of exuberant genius ; and yet maintain that the scenes in question contain much *incidental* poetry. Now and then the lustre of the true metal catches the eye, redeeming whatever is unseemly and worthless in the rude ore ; still the ore is not the metal. Nay sometimes, and not unfrequently in Shakespeare, the introduction of unpoetical matter may be necessary for the sake of relief, or as a vivid expression of recondite conceptions, and (as it were) to make friends with the reader's imagination. This necessity, however, cannot make the additions in themselves beautiful and pleasing. Sometimes, on the other hand, while we do not deny the incidental beauty of a poem, we are ashamed and indignant on witnessing the unworthy substance in which that beauty is imbedded. This remark applies strongly to the immoral compositions to which Lord Byron devoted his last years. Now to proceed with our proposed investigation.

We will notice *descriptive poetry* first. Empedocles wrote his physics in verse, and Oppian his history of animals. Neither were poets—the one was an historian of nature, the other a sort of biographer of brutes. Yet a poet may make natural history or philosophy the material of his composition. But under his hands they are no longer a bare collection of facts or principles, but are painted with a meaning, beauty, and harmonious order not their own. Thomson has sometimes been commended for the novelty and minuteness of his remarks upon nature. This is not the praise of a poet ; whose office rather is to represent *known* phenomena in a new connexion or medium. In *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* the poetical magician invests the commonest scenes of a country life with the hues, first of a mirthful, then of a pensive mind.<sup>1</sup> Pastoral poetry is a description of

<sup>1</sup> It is the charm of the descriptive poetry of a religious mind,

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rustics, agriculture, and cattle, softened off and corrected from the rude health of nature. Virgil, and much more Pope and others, have run into the fault of colouring too highly ;—instead of drawing generalized and ideal forms of *shepherds*, they have given us pictures of *gentlemen* and *beaux*. Their composition may be poetry, but it is not pastoral poetry.

The difference between poetical and historical *narrative* may be illustrated by the ‘ Tales Founded on Facts ’, generally of a religious character, so common in the present day, which we must not be thought to approve, because we use them for our purpose. The author finds in the circumstances of the case many particulars too trivial for public notice, or irrelevant to the main story, or partaking perhaps too much of the peculiarity of individual minds :—these he omits. He finds connected events separated from each other by time or place, or a course of action distributed among a multitude of agents ; he limits the scene or duration of the tale, and dispenses with his host of characters by condensing the mass of incident and action in the history of a few. He compresses long controversies into a concise argument—and exhibits characters by dialogue—and (if such be his object) brings prominently forward the course of Divine Providence by a fit disposition of his materials. Thus he selects, combines, refines, colours—in fact, *poetizes*. His facts are no longer *actual* but *ideal*—a tale *founded on* facts is a tale *generalized from* facts. The authors of *Peperil of the Peak*, and of *Brambletye House*, have given us their respective descriptions of the profligate times of Charles II. Both accounts are interesting, but for different reasons. That of the latter writer has the fidelity of history ; Walter Scott’s picture is the hideous

that nature is viewed in a moral connexion. Ordinary writers (e.g.) compare aged men to trees in autumn—a gifted poet will reverse the metaphor. Thus :—

How quiet shows the woodland scene !  
Each flower and tree, its duty done,  
Reposing in decay serene,  
*Like weary men when age is won,* etc.

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reality unintentionally softened and decorated by the poetry of his own mind. Miss Edgeworth sometimes apologizes for certain incidents in her tales, by stating they took place 'by one of those strange chances which occur in life, but seem incredible when found in writing'. Such an excuse evinces a misconception of the principle of fiction, which, being the *perfection* of the actual, prohibits the introduction of any such anomalies of experience. It is by a similar impropriety that painters sometimes introduce unusual sunsets, or other singular phenomena of lights and forms. Yet some of Miss Edgeworth's works contain much poetry of narrative. *Manœuvring* is perfect in its way—the plot and characters are natural, without being too real to be pleasing.

*Character* is made poetical by a like process. The writer draws indeed from experience; but unnatural peculiarities are laid aside, and harsh contrasts reconciled. If it be said, the fidelity of the imitation is often its greatest merit, we have only to reply, that in such cases the pleasure is not poetical, but consists in the mere recognition. All novels and tales which introduce real characters, are in the same degree unpoetical. Portrait-painting, to be poetical, should furnish an abstract representation of an individual; the abstraction being more rigid, inasmuch as the painting is confined to one point of time. The artist should draw independently of the accidents of attitude, dress, occasional feeling, and transient action. He should depict the general spirit of his subject—as if he were copying from memory, not from a few particular sittings. An ordinary painter will delineate with rigid fidelity, and will make a caricature. But the learned artist contrives so to temper his composition, as to sink all offensive peculiarities and hardnesses of individuality, without diminishing the striking effect of the likeness, or acquainting the casual spectator with the secret of his art. Miss Edgeworth's representations of the Irish character are actual, and not poetical—nor were they intended to be so. They are interesting, because they are faithful. If there is poetry about them, it exists in the personages themselves, not in her

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representation of them. She is only the accurate reporter in word of what was poetical in fact. Hence, moreover, when a deed or incident is striking in itself, a judicious writer is led to describe it in the most simple and colourless terms, his own being unnecessary; e. g. if the greatness of the action itself excites the imagination, or the depth of the suffering interests the feelings. In the usual phrase, the circumstances are left to 'speak for themselves'.

Let it not be said that our doctrine is adverse to that individuality in the delineation of character, which is a principal charm of fiction. It is not necessary for the ideality of a composition to avoid those minuter shades of difference between man and man, which give to poetry its plausibility and life; but merely such violation of general nature, such improbabilities, wanderings, or coarsenesses, as interfere with the refined and delicate enjoyment of the imagination; which would have the elements of beauty extracted out of the confused multitude of ordinary actions and habits, and combined with consistency and ease. Nor does it exclude the introduction of imperfect or odious characters. The original conception of a weak or guilty mind may have its intrinsic beauty. And much more so, when it is connected with a tale which finally adjusts whatever is reprehensible in the personages themselves. Richard and Iago are subservient to the plot. Moral excellence of character may sometimes be even a fault. The Clytemnestra of Euripides is so interesting, that the divine vengeance, which is the main subject of the drama, seems almost unjust. Lady Macbeth, on the contrary, is the conception of one deeply learned in the poetical art. She is polluted with the most heinous crimes, and meets the fate she deserves. Yet there is nothing in the picture to offend the taste, and much to feed the imagination. Romeo and Juliet are too good for the termination to which the plot leads—so are Ophelia and the bride of Larmermoor. In these cases there is something inconsistent with correct beauty, and therefore unpoetical. We do not say the fault could be avoided

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without sacrificing more than would be gained ; still it is a fault. It is scarcely possible for a poet satisfactorily to connect innocence with ultimate unhappiness, when the notion of a future life is excluded. Honours paid to the memory of the dead are some alleviation of the harshness. In his use of the doctrine of a future life, Southey is admirable. Other writers are content to conduct their heroes to temporal happiness—Southey refuses present comfort to his Ladurlad, Thalaba, and Roderick, but carries them on through suffering to another world. The death of his hero is the termination of the action ; yet so little in two of them, at least, does this catastrophe excite sorrowful feelings, that some readers may be startled to be reminded of the fact. If a melancholy is thrown over the conclusion of the *Roderick*, it is from the peculiarities of the hero's previous history.

Opinions, feelings, manners, and customs are made poetical by the delicacy or splendour with which they are expressed. This is seen in the *ode*, *elegy*, *sonnet*, and *ballad* ; in which a single idea perhaps, or familiar occurrence, is invested by the poet with pathos or dignity. The ballad of *Old Robin Gray* will serve, for an instance, out of a multitude ; again, Lord Byron's *Hebrew Melody*, beginning ' Were my bosom as false ', etc. ; or Cowper's *Lines on his Mother's Picture* ; or Milman's ' Funeral Hymn ' in the *Martyr of Antioch* ; or Milton's *Sonnet on his Blindness* ; or Bernard Barton's *Dream*. As picturesque specimens, we may name Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic* ; or Joanna Baillie's *Chough and Crow* ; and for the more exalted and splendid style, Gray's *Bard* ; or Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity* ; in which facts, with which every one is familiar, are made new by the colouring of a poetical imagination. It must all along be observed, that we are not adducing instances for their own sake ; but in order to illustrate our general doctrine, and to show its applicability to those compositions which are, by universal consent, acknowledged to be poetical.

The department of poetry we are now speaking of, is

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of much wider extent than might at first sight appear. It will include such moralizing and philosophical poems as Young's *Night Thoughts*, and Byron's *Childe Harold*.<sup>1</sup> There is much bad taste, at present, in the judgment passed on compositions of this kind. It is the fault of the day to mistake mere eloquence for poetry ; whereas, in direct opposition to the conciseness and simplicity of the poet, the talent of the orator consists in making much of a single idea. '*Sic dicet ille ut verset saepe multis modis eandem et unam rem, ut haereat in eadem commoreturque sententia.*' This is the great art of Cicero himself, who, whether he is engaged in statement, argument, or raillery, never ceases till he has exhausted the subject ; going round about it, and placing it in every different light, yet without repetition to offend or weary the reader. This faculty seems to consist in the power of throwing off harmonious sentences, which, while they have a respectable proportion of meaning, yet are especially intended to charm the ear. In popular poems, common ideas are unfolded with copiousness, and set off in polished verse—and this is called poetry. In the *Pleasures of Hope* we find this done with exquisite taste ; but it is in his minor poems that the author's powerful and free poetical genius rises to its natural elevation. In *Childe Harold*, too, the writer is carried through his Spenserian stanza with the unweariness and equable fullness of accomplished eloquence ; opening, illustrating, and heightening one idea, before he passes on to another. His composition is an extended funeral oration over buried joys and pleasures. His laments over Greece, Rome, and the fallen in various engagements, have quite the character of panegyrical orations ; while by the very attempt to describe the celebrated buildings and sculptures of antiquity, he seems to confess that *they* are the poetical text, his the rhetorical comment. Still it is a work of splendid talent. though, as a whole, not of the highest poetical excellence. Juvenal is, perhaps, the

<sup>1</sup> We would here mention Rogers's *Italy*, if such a cursory notice could convey our high opinion of its merit.

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only ancient author who habitually substitutes declamation for poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The *philosophy of mind* may equally be made subservient to poetry, as the philosophy of nature. It is a common fault to mistake a mere knowledge of the heart for poetical talent. Our greatest masters have known better;—they have subjected metaphysics to their art. In *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard*, and *Othello*, the philosophy of mind is but the material of the poet. These personages are ideal; they are effects of the contact of a given internal character with given outward circumstances, the results of combined conditions determining (so to say) a moral curve of original and inimitable properties. Philosophy is exhibited in the same subserviency to poetry in many parts of Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*. In the writings of this author there is much to offend a refined taste; but at least in the work in question there is much of a highly poetical cast. It is a representation of the action and reaction of two minds upon each other and upon the world around them. Two brothers of different characters and fortunes, and strangers to each other, meet. Their habits of mind, the formation of those habits by external circumstances, their respective media of judgment, their points of mutual attraction and

<sup>1</sup> The difference between oratory and poetry is well illustrated by a passage in a recent tragedy.

*Col.* Joined! by what tie?

*Rien.* By hatred—

By danger—the two hands that tightest grasp  
Each other—the two cords that soonest knit  
A fast and stubborn tie; your true love knot  
Is nothing to it. Faugh! the supple touch  
Of pliant interest, or the dust of time,  
Or the pin-point of temper, loose or rot  
Or snap love's silken band. Fear and old hate,  
They are sure weavers—they work for the storm,  
The whirlwind, and the rocking surge; their knot  
Endures till death.

The idea is good, and if expressed in a line or two, might have been poetry—spread out into nine or ten lines, it yields but a languid and ostentatious declamation.



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repulsion, the mental position of each in relation to a variety of trifling phenomena of every-day nature and life, are beautifully developed in a series of tales moulded into a connected narrative. We are tempted to single out the fourth book, which gives an account of the childhood and education of the younger brother, and which for variety of thought as well as fidelity of description is, in our judgment, beyond praise. The Waverley novels would afford us specimens of a similar excellence. One striking peculiarity of these tales is the author's practice of describing a group of characters bearing the same general features of mind, and placed in the same general circumstances; yet so contrasted with each other in minute differences of mental constitution, that each diverges from the common starting-place into a path peculiar to himself. The brotherhood of villains in *Kenilworth*, of knights in *Ivanhoe*, and of enthusiasts in *Old Mortality* are instances of this. This bearing of character and plot on each other is not often found in Byron's poems. The Corsair is intended for a remarkable personage. We pass by the inconsistencies of his character, considered by itself. The grand fault is that, whether it be natural or not, we are obliged to accept the author's word for the fidelity of his portrait. We are told, not shown, what the hero was. There is nothing in the plot which results from his peculiar formation of mind. An every-day bravo might equally well have satisfied the requirements of the action. Childe Harold, again, if he is anything, is a being professedly isolated from the world, and uninfluenced by it. One might as well draw Tityrus's stags grazing in the air, as a character of this kind; which yet, with more or less alteration, passes through successive editions in his other poems. Byron had very little versatility or elasticity of genius; he did not know how to make poetry out of existing materials. He declaims in his own way, and has the upper hand as long as he is allowed to go on; but, if interrogated on principles of nature and good sense, he is at once put out and brought to a stand. Yet his conception of Sardanapalus and Myrrha is fine and

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ideal, and in the style of excellence which we have just been admiring in Shakespeare and Scott.

These illustrations of Aristotle's doctrine may suffice.

Now let us proceed to a fresh position ; which, as before, shall first be broadly stated, then modified and explained. How does originality differ from the poetical talent ? Without affecting the accuracy of a definition, we may call the latter the originality of right moral feeling.

Originality may perhaps be defined as the power of abstracting for oneself, and is in thought what strength of mind is in action. Our opinions are commonly derived from education and society. Common minds transmit as they receive, good and bad, true and false ; minds of original talent feel a continual propensity to investigate subjects and strike out views for themselves ;—so that even old and established truths do not escape modification and accidental change when subjected to this process of mental digestion. Even the style of original writers is stamped with the peculiarities of their minds. When originality is found apart from good sense, which more or less is frequently the case, it shows itself in paradox and rashness of sentiment, and eccentricity of outward conduct. Poetry, on the other hand, cannot be separated from its good sense, or taste, as it is called ; which is one of its elements. It is originality energizing in the world of beauty ; the originality of grace, purity, refinement, and feeling. We do not hesitate to say, that poetry is ultimately founded on correct moral perception ;—that where there is no sound principle in exercise there will be no poetry, and that on the whole (originality being granted) in proportion to the standard of a writer's moral character, will his compositions, vary in poetical excellence. This position, however, requires some explanation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A living prelate, in his Academical Prelections, even suggests the converse of our position—*' Neque enim facile crediderim de eo qui semel hac imbutus fuerit disciplina, qui in id tota mentis acie assuefactus fuerit incumbere, ut quid sit in rebus decens, quid pulchrum, quid congruum, penitus intueretur, quin idem harum rerum perpetuum amorem foveat, et cum ab his studiis discesserit,*

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Of course, then, we do not mean to imply that a poet must necessarily *display* virtuous and religious feeling ;— we are not speaking of the actual *material* of poetry, but of its *sources*. A right moral state of heart is the formal and scientific condition of a poetical mind. Nor does it follow from our position that every poet must in fact be a man of consistent and practical principle ; except so far as good feeling commonly produces or results from good practice. Burns was a man of inconsistent practice —still, it is known, of much really sound principle at bottom. Thus his acknowledged poetical talent is in no wise inconsistent with the truth of our doctrine, which will refer the beauty which exists in his compositions to the remains of a virtuous and diviner nature within him. Nay, further than this, our theory holds good even though it be shown that a bad man may write a poem. As motives short of the purest lead to actions intrinsically good, so frames of mind short of virtuous will produce a partial and limited poetry. But even where it is exhibited, the poetry of a vicious mind will be inconsistent and debased ; i.e. so far only such, as the traces and shadows of holy truth still remain upon it. On the other hand, a right moral feeling places the mind in the very centre of that circle from which all the rays have their origin and range ; whereas minds otherwise placed command but a portion of the whole circuit of poetry. Allowing for human infirmity and the varieties of opinion, Milton, Spenser, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Southey, may be considered, as far as their writings go, to approximate to this moral centre. The following are added as further illustrations of our meaning. Walter Scott's centre is chivalrous honour ; Shakespeare exhibits the *ἥθος*, the physiognomy of an unlearned and undisciplined piety ; Homer the religion of nature and the heart, at times debased by polytheism. All these poets are religious :—the occasional irreligion of Virgil's poetry is painful to the admirers of his general taste and delicacy.

*etiam ad reliqua vitæ officia earum imaginem quasi animo infixam transferat.'*

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Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* is a magnificent composition, and has high poetical beauties ; but to a delicate judgement there is something intrinsically unpoetical in the end to which it is devoted, the praises of revel and sensuality. It corresponds to a process of clever reasoning erected on an untrue foundation—the one is a fallacy, the other is out of taste. Lord Byron's *Manfred* is in parts intensely poetical ; yet the refined mind naturally shrinks from the spirit which here and there reveals itself, and the basis on which the fable is built. From a perusal of it we should infer, according to the above theory, that there was right and fine feeling in the poet's mind, but that the central and consistent character was wanting. From the history of his life we know this to be the fact. The connexion between want of the religious principle and want of poetical feeling, is seen in the instances of Hume and Gibbon ; who had radically unpoetical minds. Rousseau is not an exception to our doctrine, for his heart was naturally religious. Lucretius too had much poetical talent ; but his work evinces that his miserable philosophy was rather the result of a bewildered judgement than a corrupt heart.

According to the above theory, revealed religion should be especially poetical—and it is so in fact. While its disclosures have an originality in them to engage the intellect, they have a beauty to satisfy the moral nature. It presents us with those ideal forms of excellence in which a poetical mind delights, and with which all grace and harmony are associated. It brings us into a new world—a world of overpowering interest, of the sublimest views, and the tenderest and purest feelings. The peculiar grace of mind of the New Testament writers is as striking as the actual effect produced upon the hearts of those who have imbibed their spirit. At present we are not concerned with the practical, but the poetical nature of revealed truth. With Christians a poetical view of things is a duty—we are bid to colour all things with hues of faith, to see a divine meaning in every event, and a superhuman tendency. Even our friends around are invested with unearthly brightness—no longer imperfect

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men, but beings taken into divine favour, stamped with his seal, and in training for future happiness. It may be added that the virtues peculiarly Christian are especially poetical;—meekness, gentleness, compassion, contentment, modesty, not to mention the devotional virtues: whereas the ruder and more ordinary feelings are the instruments of rhetoric more justly than of poetry—anger, indignation, emulation, martial spirit, and love of independence.

A few remarks on poetical composition, and we have done.—The art of composition is merely accessory to the poetical talent. But where that talent exists it necessarily gives its own character to the style, and renders it perfectly different from all others. As the poet's habits of mind lead to contemplation rather than communication with others, he is more or less obscure, according to the particular style of poetry he has adopted, less so, in epic or narrative and dramatic representation—more so, in odes and choruses. He will be obscure, moreover, from the depth of his feelings, which require a congenial reader to enter into them—and from their acuteness, which shrinks from any formal accuracy in the expression of them. And he will be obscure, not only from the carelessness of genius and from the originality of his conceptions, but (it may be) from natural deficiency in the power of clear and eloquent expression, which, we must repeat, is a talent distinct from poetry, though often mistaken for it.

Dexterity in composition, or *eloquence* as it may be called in a contracted sense of the word, is however manifestly more or less necessary in every branch of literature, though its elements may be different in each. *Poetical* eloquence consists, first in the power of illustration—which the poet uses, not as the orator, voluntarily, for the sake of clearness or ornament; but almost by constraint, as the sole outlet and expression of intense inward feeling. The spontaneous power of comparison is in some poetical minds entirely wanting; these of course cannot show to advantage as poets.—Another talent necessary to composition is the power of unfolding

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the meaning in an orderly manner. A poetical mind is often too impatient to explain itself justly ; it is overpowered by a rush of emotions, which sometimes want of power, sometimes the indolence of inward enjoyment prevents it from describing. Nothing is more difficult than to analyse the feelings of our own minds ; and the power of doing so, whether natural or acquired, is clearly distinct from experiencing them. Yet, though distinct from the poetical talent, it is obviously necessary to its exhibition. Hence it is a common praise bestowed upon writers, that they express what we have often felt but could never describe. The power of arrangement, which is necessary for an extended poem, is a modification of the same talent;—being to poetry what method is to logic. Besides these qualifications, poetical composition requires that command of language which is the mere effect of practice. The poet is a compositor ; words are his types ; he must have them within reach, and in unlimited abundance. Hence the need of careful labour to the accomplished poet—not in order that his diction may attract, but that language may be subjected to him. He studies the art of composition as we might learn dancing or elocution ; not that we may move or speak according to rule, but that by the very exercise our voice and carriage may become so unembarrassed as to allow of our doing what we will with them.

A talent for composition then is no essential part of poetry, though indispensable to its exhibition. Hence it would seem that attention to the language *for its own sake* evidences not the true poet but the mere artist. Pope is said to have tuned our tongue. We certainly owe much to him—his diction is rich, musical, and expressive. Still he is not on this account a poet ; he elaborated his composition for its own sake. If we give him poetical praise on this account, we may as appropriately bestow it on a tasteful cabinet-maker. This does not forbid us to ascribe the grace of his verse to an inward principle of poetry, which supplied him with archetypes of the beautiful and splendid to work by. But a similar internal gift must direct the skill of every fancy-artist who

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subverses the luxuries and elegancies of life. On the other hand, though Virgil is celebrated as a master of composition, yet his style is so identified with his conceptions, as their outward development, as to preclude the possibility of our viewing the one apart from the other. In Milton, again, the harmony of the verse is but the echo of the inward music which the thoughts of the poet breathe. In Moore's style the ornament continually outstrips the sense. Cowper and Walter Scott, on the other hand, are slovenly in their versification. Sophocles writes, on the whole, without studied attention to the style; but Euripides frequently affects a simplicity and prettiness which exposed him to the ridicule of the comic poets. Lastly, the style of Homer's poems is perfect in their particular department. It is free, manly, simple, perspicuous, energetic, and varied. It is the style of one who rhapsodized without deference to hearer or judge, in an age prior to the temptations which more or less prevailed over succeeding writers—before the theatre had degraded poetry into an exhibition, and criticism narrowed it into an art.

## *The Italian Prisoner*

CHARLES DICKENS

THE rising of the Italian people from under their unutterable wrongs, and the tardy burst of day upon them after the long long night of oppression that has darkened their beautiful country, have naturally caused my mind to dwell often of late on my own small wanderings in Italy. Connected with them, is a curious little drama, in which the character I myself sustained was so very subordinate that I may relate its story without any fear of being suspected of self-display. It is strictly a true story.

I am newly arrived one summer evening, in a certain small town on the Mediterranean. I have had my dinner at the inn, and I and the mosquitoes are coming out into the streets together. It is far from Naples; but a bright brown plump little woman-servant at the inn, is a Neapolitan, and is so vivaciously expert in pantomimic action, that in the single moment of answering my request to have a pair of shoes cleaned which I have left up-stairs, she plies imaginary brushes, and goes completely through the motions of polishing the shoes up, and laying them at my feet. I smile at the brisk little woman in perfect satisfaction with her briskness; and the brisk little woman, amiably pleased with me because I am pleased with her, claps her hands and laughs delightfully. We are in the inn yard. As the little woman's bright eyes sparkle on the cigarette I am smoking, I make bold to offer her one; she accepts it none the less merrily, because I touch a most charming little dimple in her fat cheek, with its light paper end. Glancing up at the many green lattices to assure herself that the mistress is not looking on, the little woman then puts her two little dimple arms a-kimbo, and stands on tiptoe to light her



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cigarette at mine. 'And now, dear little sir,' says she, puffing out smoke in a most innocent and cherubic manner, 'keep quite straight on, take the first to the right, and probably you will see him standing at his door.'

I have a commission to 'him', and I have been inquiring about him. I have carried the commission about Italy several months. Before I left England, there came to me one night a certain generous and gentle English nobleman (he is dead in these days when I relate the story, and exiles have lost their best British friend), with this request: 'Whenever you come to such a town, will you seek out one Giovanni Carlavero, who keeps a little wine-shop there, mention my name to him suddenly, and observe how it affects him?' I accepted the trust, and am on my way to discharge it.

The sirocco has been blowing all day, and it is a hot unwholesome evening with no cool sea-breeze. Mosquitoes and fire-flies are lively enough, but most other creatures are faint. The coquettish airs of pretty young women in the tiniest and wickedest of dolls' straw hats, who lean out at opened lattice blinds, are almost the only airs stirring. Very ugly and haggard old women with distaffs, and with a grey tow upon them that looks as if they were spinning out their own hair (I suppose they were once pretty, too, but it is very difficult to believe so), sit on the footway leaning against house walls. Everybody who has come for water to the fountain, stays there, and seems incapable of any such energetic idea as going home. Vespers are over, though not so long but that I can smell the heavy resinous incense as I pass the church. No man seems to be at work, save the coppersmith. In an Italian town he is always at work, and always thumping in the deadliest manner.

I keep straight on, and come in due time to the first on the right: a narrow dull street, where I see a well-favoured man of good stature and military bearing, in a great cloak, standing at a door. Drawing nearer to this threshold, I see it is the threshold of a small wine-shop ;

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and I can just make out, in the dim light, the inscription that it is kept by Giovanni Carlavero.

I touch my hat to the figure in the cloak, and pass in, and draw a stool to a little table. The lamp (just such another as they dig out of Pompeii) is lighted, but the place is empty. The figure in the cloak has followed me in, and stands before me.

‘The master?’

‘At your service, sir.’

‘Please to give me a glass of the wine of the country.’

He turns to a little counter, to get it. As his striking face is pale, and his action is evidently that of an enfeebled man, I remark that I fear he has been ill. It is not much, he courteously and gravely answers, though bad while it lasts. the fever.

As he sets the wine on the little table, to his manifest surprise I lay my hand on the back of his, look him in the face, and say in a low voice: ‘I am an Englishman, and you are acquainted with a friend of mine. Do you recollect——?’ and I mentioned the name of my generous countryman.

Instantly, he utters a loud cry, bursts into tears, and falls on his knees at my feet, clasping my legs in both his arms and bowing his head to the ground.

Some years ago, this man at my feet, whose over-fraught heart is heaving as if it would burst from his breast, and whose tears are wet upon the dress I wear, was a galley-slave in the North of Italy. He was a political offender, having been concerned in the then last rising, and was sentenced to imprisonment for life. That he would have died in his chains, is certain, but for the circumstance that the Englishman happened to visit his prison.

It was one of the vile old prisons of Italy, and a part of it was below the waters of the harbour. The place of his confinement was an arched under-ground and under-water gallery, with a grill-gate at the entrance, through which it received such light and air as it got. Its condition was insufferably foul, and a stranger could hardly breathe in it, or see in it with the aid of a torch. At the

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upper end of this dungeon, and consequently in the worst position, as being the furthest removed from light and air, the Englishman first beheld him, sitting on an iron bedstead to which he was chained by a heavy chain. His countenance impressed the Englishman as having nothing in common with the faces of the malefactors with whom he was associated, and he talked with him, and learnt how he came to be there.

When the Englishman emerged from the dreadful den into the light of day, he asked his conductor, the governor of the jail, why Giovanni Carlavero was put into the worst place?

'Because he is particularly recommended,' was the stringent answer.

'Recommended, that is to say, for death?'

'Excuse me; particularly recommended,' was again the answer.

'He has a bad tumour in his neck, no doubt occasioned by the hardship of his miserable life. If he continues to be neglected, and he remains where he is, it will kill him.'

'Excuse me, I can do nothing. He is particularly recommended.'

The Englishman was staying in that town, and he went to his home there; but the figure of this man chained to the bedstead made it no home, and destroyed his rest and peace. He was an Englishman of an extraordinarily tender heart, and he could not bear the picture. He went back to the prison grate; went back again and again, and talked to the man and cheered him. He used the utmost influence to get the man unchained from the bedstead, were it only for ever so short a time in the day, and permitted to come to the grate. It took a long time, but the Englishman's station, personal character, and steadiness of purpose, wore out opposition so far, and that grace was at last accorded. Through the bars, when he could thus get light upon the tumour, the Englishman lanced it, and it did well, and healed. His strong interest in the prisoner had greatly increased by this time, and he formed the desperate resolution that he

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would exert his utmost self-devotion and use his utmost efforts, to get Carlavero pardoned.

If the prisoner had been a brigand and a murderer, if he had committed every non-political crime in the Newgate Calendar and out of it, nothing would have been easier than for a man of any court or priestly influence to obtain his release. As it was, nothing could have been more difficult. Italian authorities, and English authorities who had interest with them, alike assured the Englishman that his object was hopeless. He met with nothing but evasion, refusal and ridicule. His political prisoner became a joke in the place. It was especially observable that English Circumlocution, and English Society on its travels, were as humorous on the subject as Circumlocution and Society may be on any subject without loss of caste. But, the Englishman possessed (and proved it well in his life) a courage very uncommon among us : he had not the least fear of being considered a bore, in a good humane cause. So he went on persistently trying, and trying, and trying, to get Giovanni Carlavero out. That prisoner had been rigorously re-chained, after the tumour operation, and it was not likely that his miserable life could last very long.

One day, when all the town knew about the Englishman and his political prisoner, there came to the Englishman a certain sprightly Italian Advocate of whom he had some knowledge ; and he made this strange proposal. 'Give me a hundred pounds to obtain Carlavero's release. I think I can get him a pardon, with that money. But I cannot tell you what I am going to do with the money, nor must you ever ask me the question if I succeed, nor must you ever ask me for an account of the money if I fail.' The Englishman decided to hazard the hundred pounds. He did so, and heard not another word of the matter. For half a year and more, the Advocate made no sign, and never once 'took on' in any way, to have the subject on his mind. The Englishman was then obliged to change his residence to another and more famous town in the North of Italy. He parted

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from the poor prisoner with a sorrowful heart, as from a doomed man for whom there was no release but Death.

The Englishman lived in his new place of abode another half-year and more, and had no tidings of the wretched prisoner. At length, one day, he received from the Advocate a cool concise mysterious note, to this effect: 'If you still wish to bestow that benefit upon the man in whom you were once interested, send me fifty pounds more, and I think it can be ensured.' Now, the Englishman had long settled in his mind that the Advocate was a heartless sharper, who had preyed upon his credulity and his interest in an unfortunate sufferer. So, he sat down and wrote a dry answer, giving the Advocate to understand that he was wiser now than he had been formerly, and that no more money was extractable from his pocket.

He lived outside the city gates, some mile or two from the post-office, and was accustomed to walk into the city with his letters and post them himself. On a lovely spring day, when the sky was exquisitely blue, and the sea Divinely beautiful, he took his usual walk, carrying this letter to the Advocate in his pocket. As he went along, his gentle heart was much moved by the loveliness of the prospect, and by the thought of the slowly dying prisoner chained to the bedstead, for whom the universe had no delights. As he drew nearer and nearer to the city where he was to post the letter, he became very uneasy in his mind. He debated with himself, was it remotely possible, after all, that this sum of fifty pounds could restore the fellow-creature whom he pitied so much, and for whom he had striven so hard, to liberty? He was not a conventionally rich Englishman—very far from that—but, he had a spare fifty pounds at the banker's. He resolved to risk it. Without doubt, God has recompensed him for the resolution.

He went to the banker's, and got a bill for the amount, and enclosed it in a letter to the Advocate that I wish I could have seen. He simply told the Advocate that he was quite a poor man, and that he was sensible it might be a great weakness in him to part with so much money

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on, the faith of so vague a communication; but, that there it was, and that he prayed the Advocate to make a good use of it. If he did otherwise, no good could ever come of it, and it would lie heavy on his soul one day.

Within a week, the Englishman was sitting at his breakfast, when he heard some suppressed sounds of agitation on the staircase, and Giovanni Carlavero leaped into the room and fell upon his breast, a free man!

Conscious of having wronged the Advocate in his own thoughts, the Englishman wrote him an earnest and grateful letter, avowing the fact, and entreating him to confide by what means and through what agency he had succeeded so well. The Advocate returned for answer through the post, 'There are many things, as you know, in this Italy of ours, that are safest and best not even spoken of—far less written of. We may meet some day, and then I may tell you what you want to know; not here, and now.' But, the two never did meet again. The Advocate was dead when the Englishman gave me my trust; and how the man had been set free, remained as great a mystery to the Englishman, and to the man himself, as it was to me.

But, I knew this :—here was the man, this sultry night, on his knees at my feet, because I was the Englishman's friend; here were his tears upon my dress; here were his sobs choking his utterance; here were his kisses on my hands, because they had touched the hands that had worked out his release. He had no need to tell me it would be happiness to him to die for his benefactor; I doubt if I ever saw real, sterling, fervent gratitude of soul, before or since.

He was much watched and suspected, he said, and had had enough to do to keep himself out of trouble. This, and his not having prospered in his worldly affairs, had led to his having failed in his usual communications to the Englishman for—as I now remember the period—some two or three years. But, his prospects were brighter, and his wife who had been very ill had recovered, and his fever had left him, and he had bought a little vineyard, and would I carry to his benefactor the

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first of its wine? Ay, that I would (I told him with enthusiasm), and not a drop of it should be spilled or lost!

He had cautiously closed the door before speaking of himself, and had talked with such excess of emotion, and in a provincial Italian so difficult to understand, that I had more than once been obliged to stop him, and beg him to have compassion on me and be slower and calmer. By degrees he became so, and tranquilly walked back with me to the hotel. There, I sat down before I went to bed and wrote a faithful account of him to the Englishman: which I concluded by saying that I would bring the wine home, against any difficulties, every drop.

Early next morning, when I came out at the hotel door to pursue my journey, I found my friend waiting with one of those immense bottles in which the Italian peasants store their wine—a bottle holding some half-dozen gallons—bound round with basket-work for greater safety on the journey. I see him now, in the bright sunlight, tears of gratitude in his eyes, proudly inviting my attention to this corpulent bottle. (At the street-corner hard by, two high-flavoured able-bodied monks—pretending to talk together, but keeping their four evil eyes upon us).

How the bottle had been got there, did not appear; but the difficulty of getting it into the ramshackle vetturino carriage in which I was departing, was so great, and it took up so much room when it was got in, that I elected to sit outside. The last I saw of Giovanni Carlavero was his running through the town by the side of the jingling wheels, clasping my hand as I stretched it down from the box, charging me with a thousand last loving and dutiful messages to his dear patron, and finally looking in at the bottle as it reposed inside, with an admiration of its honourable way of travelling that was beyond measure delightful.

And now, what disquiet of mind this dearly beloved and highly-treasured Bottle began to cost me, no man knows. It was my precious charge through a long tour, and, for hundreds of miles, I never had it off my mind by day or by night. Over bad roads—and they were

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many—I clung to it with affectionate desperation. Up mountains, I looked in at it and saw it helplessly tilting over on its back, with terror. At innumerable inn doors when the weather was bad, I was obliged to be put into my vehicle before the Bottle could be got in, and was obliged to have the Bottle lifted out before human aid could come near me. The Imp of the same name, except that his associations were all evil and these associations were all good, would have been a less troublesome travelling companion. I might have served Mr. Cruikshank as a subject for a new illustration of the miseries of the Bottle. The National Temperance Society might have made a powerful Tract of me.

The suspicions that attached to this innocent Bottle, greatly aggravated my difficulties. It was like the apple-pie in the child's book. Parma pouted at it, Modena mocked it, Tuscany tackled it, Naples nibbled it, Rome refused it, Austria accused it, Soldiers suspected it, Jesuits jobbed it. I composed a neat Oration, developing my inoffensive intentions in connexion with this Bottle, and delivered it in an infinity of guard-houses, at a multitude of town gates, and on every drawbridge, angle, and rampart, of a complete system of fortifications. Fifty times a day, I got down to harangue an infuriated soldiery about the Bottle. Through the filthy degradation of the abject and vile Roman States, I had as much difficulty in working my way with the Bottle, as if it had bottled up a complete system of heretical theology. In the Neapolitan country, where everybody was a spy, a soldier, a priest, or a lazzarone, the shameless beggars of all four denominations incessantly pounced on the Bottle and made it a pretext for extorting money from me. Quires—quires do I say? Reams—of forms illegibly printed on whity-brown paper were filled up about the Bottle, and it was the subject of more stamping and sanding than I had ever seen before. In consequence of which haze of sand, perhaps, it was always irregular, and always latent with dismal penalties of going back or not going forward, which were only to be abated by the silver crossing of a base hand, poked shirtless out of a



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ragged uniform sleeve. Under all discouragements, however, I stuck to my Bottle, and held firm to my resolution that every drop of its contents should reach the Bottle's destination.

The latter refinement cost me a separate heap of troubles on its own separate account. What corkscrews did I see the military power bring out against that Bottle; what gimlets, spikes, divining rods, gauges, and unknown tests and instruments! At some places, they persisted in declaring that the wine must not be passed, without being opened and tasted; I, pleading to the contrary, used then to argue the question seated on the Bottle lest they should open it in spite of me. In the southern parts of Italy more violent shrieking, face-making, and gesticulating, greater vehemence of speech and countenance and action went on about that Bottle, than would attend fifty murders in a northern latitude. It raised important functionaries out of their beds, in the dead of night. I have known half-a-dozen military lanterns to disperse themselves at all points of a great sleeping Piazza, each lantern summoning some official creature to get up, put on his cocked-hat instantly, and come and stop the Bottle. It was characteristic that, while this innocent Bottle had such immense difficulty in getting from little town to town, Signor Mazzini and the fiery cross were traversing Italy from end to end.

Still, I stuck to my Bottle, like any fine old English gentleman all of the olden time. The more the Bottle was interfered with, the stauncher I became (if possible) in my first determination that my countryman should have it delivered to him intact, as the man whom he had so nobly restored to life and liberty had delivered it to me. If ever I had been obstinate in my days—and I may have been, say, once or twice—I was obstinate about the Bottle. But, I made it a rule always to keep a pocket full of small coin at its service, and never to be out of temper in its cause. Thus, I and the Bottle made our way. Once we had a break-down; rather a bad break-down, on a steep high place with the sea below us, on a tempestuous evening when it blew great guns.

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We were driving four wild horses abreast, Southern fashion, and there was some little difficulty in stopping them. I was outside, and not thrown off; but no words can describe my feelings when I saw the Bottle—traveling inside, as usual—burst the door open, and roll obesely out into the road. A blessed Bottle with a charmed existence, he took no hurt, and we repaired damage, and went on triumphant.

A thousand representations were made to me that the Bottle must be left at this place, or that, and called for again. I never yielded to one of them, and never parted from the Bottle on any pretence, consideration, threat or entreaty. I had no faith in any official receipt for the Bottle, and nothing would induce me to accept one. These unmanageable politics at last brought me and the Bottle, still triumphant, to Genoa. There, I took a tender and reluctant leave of him for a few weeks, and consigned him to a trusty English captain, to be conveyed to the Port of London by sea.

While the Bottle was on his voyage to England, I read the Shipping Intelligence as anxiously as if I had been an underwriter. There was some stormy weather after I myself had got to England by way of Switzerland and France, and my mind greatly misgave me that the Bottle might be wrecked. At last to my great joy, I received notice of his safe arrival, and immediately went down to Saint Katharine's Docks, and found him in a state of honourable captivity in the Custom House.

The wine was mere vinegar when I set it down before the generous Englishman—probably it had been something like vinegar when I took it from Giovanni Carlavero—but not a drop of it was spilled or gone. And the Englishman told me, with much emotion in his face and voice, that he had never tasted wine that seemed to him so sweet and sound. And long afterwards, the Bottle graced his table. And the last time I saw him in this world that misses him, he took me aside in a crowd, to say, with his amiable smile: 'We were talking of you only to-day at dinner, and I wished you had been there, for I had some Claret up in Carlavero's Bottle.'

## Sweetness and Light

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THE disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity ; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity ; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very different estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity ; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. With us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this : that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many

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other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says: ‘The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent.’ This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a *study of perfection*. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu’s words: ‘To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!’ so, in the second

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view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson: 'To make reason and the will of God prevail!'

Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which is not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardour, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine,—social, political, religious,—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new

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has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavour of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the

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aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—culture seeking the determination of this question through *all* the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,—likewise reaches. Religion says : *The kingdom of God is within you* ; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion : ‘ It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture.’ Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it ; and here, too, it coincides with religion.

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. And here, once more, culture lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably

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put it, that 'to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness.'

But, finally, perfection,—as culture from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it,—is a harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here culture goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilization is, to a much greater degree than the civilization of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilization tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of 'every man for himself'. Above all, the idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with



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our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere. And, meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for every one to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger ; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve ; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery ? What is population but machinery ? What is coal but machinery ? What are railroads but machinery ? What is wealth but machinery ? What are, even, religious organizations but machinery ? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. ' May not every man in England say what he likes ? '—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks ; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign

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strictures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what *is* greatness?—culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed,—the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare

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are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines. Culture says: 'Consider these people, then. their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths. the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds: would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?' And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarized, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigour, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, one has heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right!

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But bodily health and vigour, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarizing a worship as that is. Every one with anything like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigour and activity. 'Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things,' says the author of the *Epistle to Timothy*. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly:—'Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of the body, *in reference to the services of the mind*.' But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assigns to it, a special and limited character, this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus:—'It is a sign of ἀφύια,' says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—'to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern.' This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek word εὐφύια a finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive it: a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites 'the two noblest of things',—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the*

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*Books*,—‘the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*.’ The εὐφύις is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the ἀφύις, on the other hand, is our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright’s misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than on our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organizations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side,—which is the dominant idea of religion,—has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other.

The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was,—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete

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human perfection, so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it *is* wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organizations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world has done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil*, to *overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organizations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies them in abundance with this grand language. And very freely do they use it; yet it is really the severest possible criticism of such an incomplete perfection

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as alone we have yet reached through our religious organizations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism. Nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organization of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: 'The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion.' There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it, language, too, which is in our mouths every day. 'Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling,' says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal: 'The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!' And religious organizations like this are what people believe in, rest in, and give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organization which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organizations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organizations by the ideals of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the

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necessary first stage to a harmonious perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organizations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail. They have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense. They have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable. And they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organizations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it,—so I say with regard to the religious organizations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*,—a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!



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Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organizations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: and how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organization as you yourself reflect it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organizations,—expressing, as I have said, the most widespread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organization or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publice egestas, privatim opulentia*,—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph*! I say that when our religious organizations,

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—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organizations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth, —mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete, a harmonious perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it *is* machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organization,—or whether it is a religious organization,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organization, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it; and that its mischiefs are to be criticized, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose.

Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and

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industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question ; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life ; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it ; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports ; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis ; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future ; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists has been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech may be necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph* in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government may be necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults ; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth,—the

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truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr. Newman's *Apology* may see, against what in one word may be called 'Liberalism'. Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore:—

Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free-trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelligent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr. Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the

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other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future ; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now ? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism : different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better ; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movement, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism,—who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession ? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer !

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what ; but those promises come rather from its advocates,

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wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is *an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy*. Mr. Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who 'appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise'; he leads his disciples to believe,—what the Englishman is always too ready to believe,—that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy,—'the men,' as he calls them, 'upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests,'—he cries out to them: 'See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world.' Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Lowe debauches the minds of the middle classes, and makes such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he *is*, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built.

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Only the middle classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the *Journeyman Engineer*, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection,—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy,—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of its own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism. Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr. Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte,—one of them, Mr. Congreve, is an old friend of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character,—are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr. Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism,—its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and

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systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas ; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other ; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrowness and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race.

The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, will have us observe that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the natural current there is in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient ; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing.

I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom America has yet produced,—Benjamin Franklin,—I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. 'I give,' he continues, 'a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind, of version I would recommend.' We all recollect the famous verse of our translation:



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Then Satan answered the Lord and said: "Doth Job fear God for nought?" Franklin makes this: 'Does your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?' I well remember how, when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: 'After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!' So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the *Deontology*. There I read: 'While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience.' From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer. I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for supplying the rule of human society, for perfection.

Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle, or Mr. Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text: 'Be not ye called Rabbi!' and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world: and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture,—eternally passing onwards and seeking,—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past,

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cannot away with the inexhaustible indulgence proper to culture, the consideration of circumstances, the severe judgment of actions joined to the merciful judgment of persons. 'The man of culture is in politics,' cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, 'one of the poorest mortals alive!' Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a 'turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action'. Of what use is culture, he asks, except for 'a critic of new books or a professor of *belles lettres*?' Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses through the whole production in which Mr. Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use because, like religion,—that other effort after perfection,—it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the

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creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organizations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watch-words. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably

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precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany ; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why ? Because they *humanized* knowledge ; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence ; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said : ‘ Let us not leave thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness ; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times ; for the old order is passed, and the new arises ; the night is spent, the day is come forth ; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs ; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet.’

## *A Liberal Education ; and Where to Find it*

THOMAS H. HUXLEY

**T**HE business which the South London Working Men's College has undertaken is a great work ; indeed, I might say, that Education, with which that college proposes to grapple, is the greatest work of all those which lie ready to a man's hand just at present.

And, at length, this fact is becoming generally recognized. You cannot go anywhere without hearing a buzz of more or less confused and contradictory talk on this subject—nor can you fail to notice that, in one point at any rate, there is a very decided advance upon like discussions in former days. Nobody outside the agricultural interest now dares to say that education is a bad thing. If any representative of the once large and powerful party, which, in former days, proclaimed this opinion, still exists in a semi-fossil state, he keeps his thoughts to himself. In fact, there is a chorus of voices, almost distressing in their harmony, raised in favour of the doctrine that education is the great panacea for human troubles, and that, if the country is not shortly to go to the dogs, everybody must be educated.

The politicians tell us, ' You must educate the masses because they are going to be masters.' The clergy join in the cry for education, for they affirm that the people are drifting away from church and chapel into the broadest infidelity. The manufacturers and the capitalists swell the chorus lustily. They declare that ignorance makes bad workmen ; that England will soon be unable to turn out cotton goods, or steam engines, cheaper than other people ; and then, Ichabod ! Ichabod ! the glory will be departed from us. And a few voices are lifted

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up in favour of the doctrine that the masses should be educated because they are men and women with unlimited capacities of being, doing and suffering, and that it is as true now, as ever it was, that the people perish for lack of knowledge.

These members of the minority, with whom I confess I have a good deal of sympathy, are doubtful whether any of the other reasons urged in favour of the education of the people are of much value—whether, indeed, some of them are based upon either wise or noble grounds of action. They question if it be wise to tell people that you will do for them, out of fear of their power, what you have left undone, so long as your only motive was compassion for their weakness and their sorrows. And, if ignorance of everything which it is needful a ruler should know is likely to do so much harm in the governing classes of the future, why is it, they ask reasonably enough, that such ignorance in the governing classes of the past has not been viewed with equal horror?

Compare the average artisan and the average country squire, and it may be doubted if you will find a pin to choose between the two in point of ignorance, class feeling or prejudice. It is true that the ignorance is of a different sort—that the class feeling is in favour of a different class—and that the prejudice has a distinct savour of wrong-headedness in each case—but it is questionable if the one is either a bit better, or a bit worse, than the other. The old protectionist theory is the doctrine of trades unions as applied by the squires, and the modern trades unionism is the doctrine of the squires applied by the artisans. Why should we be worse off under one *régime* than under the other?

Again, this sceptical minority asks the clergy to think whether it is really want of education which keeps the masses away from their ministrations—whether the most completely educated men are not as open to reproach on this score as the workmen; and whether, perchance, this may not indicate that it is not education which lies at the bottom of the matter?

Once more, these people, whom there is no pleasing,

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venture to doubt whether the glory, which rests upon being able to undersell all the rest of the world, is a very safe kind of glory—whether we may not purchase it too dear; especially if we allow education, which ought to be directed to the making of men, to be diverted into a process of manufacturing human tools, wonderfully adroit in the exercise of some technical industry, but good for nothing else.

And, finally, these people inquire whether it is the masses alone who need a reformed and improved education. They ask whether the richest of our public schools might not well be made to supply knowledge, as well as gentlemanly habits, a strong class feeling, and eminent proficiency in cricket. They seem to think that the noble foundations of our old universities are hardly fulfilling their functions in their present posture of half-clerical seminaries, half racecourses, where men are trained to win a senior wranglership, or a double-fist, as horses are trained to win a cup, with as little reference to the needs of after-life in the case of the man as in that of the racer. And, while as zealous for education as the rest, they affirm that, if the education of the richer classes were such as to fit them to be the leaders and the governors of the poorer; and, if the education of the poorer classes were such as to enable them to appreciate really wise guidance and good governance, the politicians need not fear mob-law, nor the clergy lament their want of flocks, nor the capitalists prognosticate the annihilation of the prosperity of the country.

Such is the diversity of opinion upon the why and the wherefore of education. And my hearers will be prepared to expect that the practical recommendations which are put forward are not less discordant. There is a loud cry for compulsory education. We English, in spite of constant experience to the contrary, preserve a touching faith in the efficacy of acts of Parliament; and I believe we should have compulsory education in the course of next session, if there were the least probability that half a dozen leading statesmen of different parties would agree what that education should be.

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Some hold that education without theology is worse than none. Others maintain, quite as strongly, that education with theology is in the same predicament. But this is certain, that those who hold the first opinion can by no means agree what theology should be taught ; and that those who maintain the second are in a small minority.

At any rate ' make people learn to read, write and cipher ' , say a great many ; and the advice is undoubtedly sensible as far as it goes. But, as has happened to me in former days, those who, in despair of getting anything better, advocate this measure, are met with the objection that it is very like making a child practise the use of a knife, fork and spoon, without giving it a particle of meat. I really don't know what reply is to be made to such an objection.

But it would be unprofitable to spend more time in disentangling, or rather in showing up the knots in the ravelled skeins of our neighbours. Much more to the purpose is it to ask if we possess any clue of our own which may guide us among these entanglements. And by way of a beginning, let us ask ourselves—What is education ? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education ?—of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves—of that education which, if we could mould the fates to our own will, we would give our children ? Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine, and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces ; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check ? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its



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members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an

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extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full vigour of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phenomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors, pleasure and pain; but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions; or, in other words, by the laws of the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other mode of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for any one, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members—Nature having no Test-Acts.

Those who take honours in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the 'Poll', who

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pick up just enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked; and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as wilful disobedience—incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first; but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods; to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with wilful disobedience; and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her pleasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order: ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of

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life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience ; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education ; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely : she as his ever beneficent mother ; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter.

Where is such an education as this to be had ? Where is there any approximation to it ? Has any one tried to found such an education ? Looking over the length and breadth of these islands, I am afraid that all these questions must receive a negative answer. Consider our primary schools and what is taught in them. A child learns :—

1. To read, write and cipher, more or less well ; but in a very large proportion of cases not so well as to take pleasure in reading, or to be able to write the commonest letter properly.

2. A quantity of dogmatic theology, of which the child, nine times out of ten, understands next to nothing.

3. Mixed up with this, so as to seem to stand or fall with it, a few of the broadest and simplest principles of morality. This, to my mind, is much as if a man of science should make the story of the fall of the apple in Newton's garden an integral part of the doctrine of gravitation, and teach it as of equal authority with the law of the inverse squares.

4. A good deal of Jewish history and Syrian geography, and perhaps a little something about English history and the geography of the child's own country. But I doubt if there is a primary school in England in which hangs a map of the hundred in which the village lies, so that the children may be practically taught by it what a map means.

5. A certain amount of regularity, attentive obedience, respect for others—obtained by fear, if the master be

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incompetent or foolish ; by love and reverence, if he be wise.

So far as this school course embraces a training in the theory and practice of obedience to the moral laws of Nature, I gladly admit, not only that it contains a valuable educational element, but that, so far, it deals with the most valuable and important part of all education. Yet, contrast what is done in this direction with what might be done ; with the time given to matters of comparatively no importance ; with the absence of any attention to things of the highest moment ; and one is tempted to think of Falstaff's bill and ' the halfpenny worth of bread to all that quantity of sack '.

Let us consider what a child thus ' educated ' knows, and what it does not know. Begin with the most important topic of all—morality, as the guide of conduct. The child knows well enough that some acts meet with approbation and some with disapprobation. But it has never heard that there lies in the nature of things a reason for every moral law, as cogent and as well defined as that which underlies every physical law ; that stealing and lying are just as certain to be followed by evil consequences, as putting your hand in the fire, or jumping out of a garret window. Again, though the scholar may have been made acquainted, in dogmatic fashion, with the broad laws of morality, he has had no training in the application of those laws to the difficult problems which result from the complex conditions of modern civilization. Would it not be very hard to expect any one to solve a problem in conic sections who had merely been taught the axioms and definitions of mathematical science ?

A workman has to bear hard labour, and perhaps privation, while he sees others rolling in wealth, and feeding their dogs with what would keep his children from starvation. Would it not be well to have helped that man to calm the natural promptings of discontent by showing him, in his youth, the necessary connexion of the moral law which prohibits stealing with the stability of society—by proving to him, once for all,

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that it is better for his own people, better for himself, better for future generations, that he should starve than steal? If you have no foundation of knowledge, or habit of thought, to work upon, what chance have you of persuading a hungry man that a capitalist is not a thief 'with a circumbendibus?' And if he honestly believes that, of what avail is it to quote the commandment against stealing, when he proposes to make the capitalist disgorge?

Again, the child learns absolutely nothing of the history or the political organization of his own country. His general impression is, that everything of much importance happened a very long while ago; and that the Queen and the gentlefolks govern the country much after the fashion of King David and the elders and nobles of Israel—his sole models. Will you give a man with this much information a vote? In easy times he sells it for a pot of beer. Why should he not? It is of about as much use to him as a chignon, and he knows as much what to do with it, for any other purpose. In bad times, on the contrary, he applies his simple theory of government, and believes that his rulers are the cause of his sufferings—a belief which sometimes bears remarkable practical fruits.

Least of all, does the child gather from this primary 'education' of ours a conception of the laws of the physical world, or of the relations of cause and effect therein. And this is the more to be lamented, as the poor are especially exposed to physical evils, and are more interested in removing them than any other class of the community. If any one is concerned in knowing the ordinary laws of mechanics, one would think it is the hand-labourer, whose daily toil lies among levers and pulleys; or among the other implements of artisan work. And if any one is interested in the laws of health, it is the poor workman, whose strength is wasted by ill-prepared food, whose health is sapped by bad ventilation and bad drainage, and half whose children are massacred by disorders which might be prevented. Not only does our present primary education carefully abstain from

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hinting to the workman that some of his greatest evils are traceable to mere physical agencies, which could be removed by energy, patience, and frugality ; but it does worse—it renders him, so far as it can, deaf to those who could help him, and tries to substitute an Oriental submission to what is falsely declared to be the will of God, for his natural tendency to strive after a better condition.

What wonder, then, if very recently an appeal has been made to statistics for the profoundly foolish purpose of showing that education is of no good—that it diminishes neither misery nor crime among the masses of mankind ? I reply, why should the thing which has been called education do either the one or the other ? If I am a knave or a fool, teaching me to read and write won't make me less of either one or the other—unless somebody shows me how to put my reading and writing to wise and good purposes.

Suppose any one were to argue that medicine is of no use, because it could be proved statistically that the percentage of deaths was just the same among people who had been taught how to open a medicine chest, and among those who did not so much as know the key by sight. The argument is absurd ; but it is not more preposterous than that against which I am contending. The only medicine for suffering, crime, and all the other woes of mankind, is wisdom. Teach a man to read and write, and you have put into his hands the great keys of the wisdom box. But it is quite another matter whether he ever opens the box or not. And he is as likely to poison as to cure himself, if, without guidance, he swallows the first drug that comes to hand. In these times a man may as well be purblind, as unable to read—lame, as unable to write. But I protest that, if I thought the alternative were a necessary one, I would rather that the children of the poor should grow up ignorant of both these mighty arts, than that they should remain ignorant of that knowledge to which these arts are means.

It may be said that all these animadversions may apply to primary schools, but that the higher schools, at any

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rate, must be allowed to give a liberal education. In fact they professedly sacrifice everything else to this object.

Let us inquire into this matter. What do the higher schools, those to which the great middle class of the country sends its children, teach, over and above the instruction given in the primary schools? There is a little more reading and writing of English. But, for all that, every one knows that it is a rare thing to find a boy of the middle or upper classes who can read aloud decently, or who can put his thoughts on paper in clear and grammatical (to say nothing of good or elegant) language. The 'ciphering' of the lower schools expands into elementary mathematics in the higher; into arithmetic, with a little algebra, a little Euclid. But I doubt if one boy in five hundred has ever heard the explanation of a rule of arithmetic, or knows his Euclid otherwise than by rote.

Of theology, the middle class schoolboy gets rather less than poorer children, less absolutely and less relatively, because there are so many other claims upon his attention. I venture to say that, in the great majority of cases, his ideas on this subject, when he leaves school, are of the most shadowy and vague description, and associated with painful impressions of the weary hours spent in learning collects and catechism by heart.

Modern geography, modern history, modern literature; the English language as a language; the whole circle of the sciences, physical, moral and social, are even more completely ignored in the higher than in the lower schools. Up till within a few years back, a boy might have passed through any one of the great public schools with the greatest distinction and credit, and might never so much as have heard of one of the subjects I have just mentioned. He might never have heard that the earth goes round the sun; that England underwent a great revolution in 1688, and France another in 1789; that there once lived certain notable men called Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Voltaire, Goethe, Schiller. The first might be a German and the last an Englishman for



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anything he could tell you to the contrary. And as for Science, the only idea the word would suggest to his mind would be dexterity in boxing.

I have said that this was the state of things a few years back, for the sake of the few righteous who are to be found among the educational cities of the plain. But I would not have you too sanguine about the result, if you sound the minds of the existing generation of public schoolboys, on such topics as those I have mentioned.

Now let us pause to consider this wonderful state of affairs; for the time will come when Englishmen will quote it as the stock example of the stolid stupidity of their ancestors in the nineteenth century. The most thoroughly commercial people, the greatest voluntary wanderers and colonists the world has ever seen, are precisely the middle classes of this country. If there be a people which has been busy making history on the great scale for the last three hundred years—and the most profoundly interesting history—history which, if it happened to be that of Greece or Rome, we should study with avidity—it is the English. If there be a people which, during the same period, has developed a remarkable literature, it is our own. If there be a nation whose prosperity depends absolutely and wholly upon their mastery over the forces of Nature, upon their intelligent apprehension of, and obedience to, the laws of the creation and distribution of wealth, and of the stable equilibrium of the forces of society, it is precisely this nation. And yet this is what these wonderful people tell their sons:—‘At the cost of from one to two thousand pounds of our hard-earned money, we devote twelve of the most precious years of your lives to school. There you shall toil, or be supposed to toil; but there you shall not learn one single thing of all those you will most want to know directly you leave school and enter upon the practical business of life. You will in all probability go into business, but you shall not know where, or how, any article of commerce is produced, or the difference between an export or an import, or the meaning of the

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word 'capital'. You will very likely settle in a colony, but you shall not know whether Tasmania is part of New South Wales, or vice versa.

'Very probably you may become a manufacturer, but you shall not be provided with the means of understanding the working of one of your own steam engines, or the nature of the raw products you employ; and, when you are asked to buy a patent, you shall not have the slightest means of judging whether the inventor is an impostor who is contravening the elementary principles of science, or a man who will make you as rich as Cræsus.

'You will very likely get into the House of Commons. You will have to take your share in making laws which may prove a blessing or a curse to millions of men. But you shall not hear one word respecting the political organization of your country; the meaning of the controversy between free-traders and protectionists shall never have been mentioned to you; you shall not so much as know that there are such things as economical laws.

'The mental power which will be of most importance in your daily life will be the power of seeing things as they are without regard to authority; and of drawing accurate general conclusions from particular facts. But at school and at college you shall know of no source of truth but authority; nor exercise your reasoning faculty upon anything but deduction from that which is laid down by authority.

'You will have to weary your soul with work, and many a time eat your bread in sorrow and in bitterness, and you shall not have learned to take refuge in the great source of pleasure without alloy, the serene resting-place for worn human nature,—the world of art.'

Said I not rightly that we are a wonderful people? I am quite prepared to allow, that education entirely devoted to these omitted subjects might not be a completely liberal education. But is an education which ignores them all a liberal education? Nay, is it too

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much to say that the education which should embrace these subjects and no others would be a real education, though an incomplete one ; while an education which omits them is really not an education at all, but a more or less useful course of intellectual gymnastics ?

For what does the middle-class school put in the place of all these things which are left out ? It substitutes what is usually comprised under the compendious title of the 'classics'—that is to say, the languages, the literature, and the history of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the geography of so much of the world as was known to these two great nations of antiquity. Now, do not expect me to depreciate the earnest and enlightened pursuit of classical learning. I have not the least desire to speak ill of such occupations, nor any sympathy with those who run them down. On the contrary, if my opportunities had lain in that direction, there is no investigation into which I could have thrown myself with greater delight than that of antiquity.

What science can present greater attractions than philology ? How can a lover of literary excellence fail to rejoice in the ancient masterpieces ? And with what consistency could I, whose business lies so much in the attempt to decipher the past, and to build up intelligible forms out of the scattered fragments of long-extinct beings, fail to take a sympathetic, though an unlearned, interest in the labours of a Niebuhr, a Gibbon, or a Grote ? Classical history is a greater section of the palæontology of man ; and I have the same double respect for it as for other kinds of palæontology—that is to say, a respect for the facts which it establishes as for all facts, and a still greater respect for it as a preparation for the discovery of a law of progress.

But if the classics were taught as they might be taught—if boys and girls were instructed in Greek and Latin, not merely as languages, but as illustrations of philological science ; if a vivid picture of life on the shores of the Mediterranean two thousand years ago were imprinted on the minds of scholars ; if ancient history were taught, not as a weary series of feuds and fights, but traced to

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its causes in such men placed under such conditions ; if, lastly, the study of the classical books were followed in such a manner as to impress boys with their beauties, and with the grand simplicity of their statement of the everlasting problems of human life, instead of with their verbal and grammatical peculiarities ; I still think it as little proper that they should form the basis of a liberal education for our contemporaries, as I should think it fitting to make that sort of palæontology with which I am familiar the back-bone of modern education.

It is wonderful how close a parallel to classical training could be made out of that palæontology to which I refer. In the first place, I could get up an osteological primer so arid, so pedantic in its terminology, so altogether distasteful to the youthful mind, as to beat the recent famous production of the head masters out of the field in all these excellences. Next, I could exercise my boys upon easy fossils, and bring out all their powers of memory and all their ingenuity in the application of my osteo-grammatical rules to the interpretation, or construing, of those fragments. To those who had reached the higher classes, I might supply odd bones to be built up into animals, giving great honour and reward to him who succeeded in fabricating monsters most entirely in accordance with the rules. That would answer to verse making and essay writing in the dead languages.

To be sure, if a great comparative anatomist were to look at these fabrications he might shake his head, or laugh. But what then ? Would such a catastrophe destroy the parallel ? What, think you, would Cicero, or Horace, say to the production of the best sixth form going ? And would not Terence stop his years and run out if he could be present at an English performance of his own plays ? Would *Hamlet*, in the mouths of a set of French actors, who should insist on pronouncing English after the fashion of their own tongue, be more hideously ridiculous ?

But it will be said that I am forgetting the beauty, and the human interest, which appertain to classical

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studies. To this reply that it is only a very strong man who can appreciate the charms of a landscape as he is toiling up a steep hill, along a bad road. What with short-windedness, stones, ruts, and a pervading sense of the wisdom of rest and be thankful, most of us have little enough sense of the beautiful under these circumstances. The ordinary schoolboy is precisely in this case. He finds Parnassus uncommonly steep, and there is no chance of his having much time or inclination to look about him till he gets to the top. And nine times out of ten he does not get to the top.

But if this be a fair picture of the results of classical teaching at its best—and I gather from those who have authority to speak on such matters that it is so—what is to be said of classical teaching at its worst, or in other words, of the classics of our ordinary middle-class schools?<sup>1</sup> I will tell you. It means getting up endless forms and rules by heart. It means turning Latin and Greek into English, for the mere sake of being able to do it, and without the smallest regard to the worth, or worthlessness, of the author read. It means the learning of innumerable, not always decent, fables in such a shape that the meaning they once had is dried up into utter trash; and the only impression left upon a boy's mind is, that the people who believed such things must have been the greatest idiots the world ever saw. And it means, finally, that, after a dozen years spent at this kind of work, the sufferer shall be incompetent to interpret a passage in an author he has not already got up; that he shall loathe the sight of a Greek or Latin book; and that he shall never open, or think of, a classical writer again, until, wonderful to relate, he insists upon submitting his sons to the same process.

These be your gods, O Israel! For the sake of this net result (and respectability) the British father denies his children all the knowledge they might turn to account in life, not merely for the achievement of vulgar success,

<sup>1</sup> For a justification of what is here said about these schools, see that valuable book, *Essays on a Liberal Education*, *passim*.

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but for guidance in the great crises of human existence. This is the stone he offers to those whom he is bound by the strongest and tenderest ties to feed with bread.

If primary and secondary education are in this unsatisfactory state, what is to be said to the universities? This is an awful subject, and one I almost fear to touch with my unhallowed hands ; but I can tell you what those say who have authority to speak.

The Rector of Lincoln College, in his lately published valuable *Suggestions for Academical Organization with especial reference to Oxford*, tells us (p. 127) :—

‘ The colleges were, in their origin, endowments, not for the elements of a general liberal education, but for the prolonged study of special and professional faculties by men of riper age. The universities embraced both these objects. The colleges, while they incidentally aided in elementary education, were specially devoted to the highest learning. . . .

‘ This was the theory of the middle-age university and the design of collegiate foundations in their origin. Time and circumstances have brought about a total change. The colleges no longer promote the researches of science, or direct professional study. Here and there college walls may shelter an occasional student, but not in larger proportions than may be found in private life. Elementary teaching of youths under twenty is now the only function performed by the university, and almost the only object of college endowments. Colleges were homes for the life-study of the highest and most abstruse parts of knowledge. They have become boarding schools in which the elements of the learned languages are taught to youths.’

If Mr. Pattison's high position, and his obvious love and respect for his university, be insufficient to convince the outside world that language so severe is yet no more than just, the authority of the Commissioners who reported on the University of Oxford in 1850 is open to no challenge. Yet they write :—

‘ It is generally acknowledged that both Oxford and the country at large suffer greatly from the absence of a

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body of learned men devoting their lives to the cultivation of science, and to the direction of academical education.

'The fact that so few books of profound research emanate from the University of Oxford, materially impairs its character as a seat of learning and consequently its hold on the respect of the nation.'

Cambridge can claim no exemption from the reproaches addressed to Oxford. And thus there seems no escape from the admission that what we fondly call our great seats of learning are simply 'boarding schools' for bigger boys; that learned men are not more numerous in them than out of them; that the advancement of knowledge is not the object of fellows of colleges; that, in the philosophic calm and meditative stillness of their greenswarded courts, philosophy does not thrive, and meditation bears few fruits.

It is my great good fortune to reckon amongst my friends resident members of both universities, who are men of learning and research, zealous cultivators of science, keeping before their minds a noble ideal of a university, and doing their best to make that ideal a reality; and, to me, they would necessarily typify the universities, did not the authoritative statements I have quoted compel me to believe that they are exceptional and not representative men. Indeed, upon calm consideration, several circumstances lead me to think that the Rector of Lincoln College and the Commissioners cannot be far wrong.

I believe there can be no doubt that the foreigner who should wish to become acquainted with the scientific, or the literary, activity of modern England, would simply lose his time and his pains if he visited our universities with that object.

And, as for works of profound research on any subject, and, above all, in that classical lore for which the universities profess to sacrifice almost everything else, why, a third-rate, poverty-stricken German university turns out more produce of that kind in one year, than our vast and wealthy foundations elaborate in ten.

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Ask the man who is investigating any question, profoundly and thoroughly—be it historical, philosophical, philological, physical, literary, or theological; who is trying to make himself master of any abstract subject (except, perhaps, political economy and geology, both of which are intensely Anglican sciences), whether he is not compelled to read half a dozen times as many German as English books? And whether, of these English books, more than one in ten is the work of a fellow of a college, or a professor of an English university?

Is this from any lack of power in the English as compared with the German mind? The countrymen of Grote and of Mill, of Faraday, of Robert Brown, of Lyell, and of Darwin, to go no further back than the contemporaries of men of middle age, can afford to smile at such a suggestion. England can show now, as she has been able to show in every generation since civilization spread over the West, individual men who hold their own against the world, and keep alive the old tradition of her intellectual eminence.

But in the majority of cases, these men are what they are in virtue of their native intellectual force, and of a strength of character which will not recognize impediments. They are not trained in the courts of the Temple of Science, but storm the walls of that edifice in all sorts of irregular ways, and with much loss of time and power, in order to obtain their legitimate positions.

Our universities not only do not encourage such men; do not offer them positions, in which it should be their highest duty to do, thoroughly, that which they are most capable of doing; but, as far as possible, university training shuts out of the minds of those among them, who are subjected to it, the prospect that there is anything in the world for which they are specially fitted. Imagine the success of the attempt to still the intellectual hunger of any of the men I have mentioned, by putting before him, as the object of existence, the successful mimicry of the measure of a Greek song, or the roll of Ciceronian prose! Imagine how much success would be likely to attend the



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attempt to persuade such men that the education which leads to perfection in such elegances is alone to be called culture; while the facts of history, the process of thought, the conditions of moral and social existence, and the laws of physical nature are left to be dealt with as they may by outside barbarians!

It is not thus that the German universities, from being beneath notice a century ago, have become what they are now—the most intensely cultivated and the most productive intellectual corporations the world has ever seen.

The student who repairs to them sees in the list of classes and of professors a fair picture of the world of knowledge. Whatever he needs to know there is some one ready to teach him, some one competent to discipline him in the way of learning; whatever his special bent, let him but be able and diligent, and in due time he shall find distinction and a career. Among his professors, he sees men whose names are known and revered throughout the civilized world; and their living example infects him with a noble ambition, and a love for the spirit of work.

The Germans dominate the intellectual world by virtue of the same simple secret as that which made Napoleon the master of old Europe. They have declared *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, and every Bursch marches with a professor's gown in his knapsack. Let him become a great scholar, or man of science, and ministers will compete for his services. In Germany, they do not leave the chance of his holding the office he would render illustrious to the tender mercies of a hot canvass and the final wisdom of a mob of country persons.

In short, in Germany, the universities are exactly what the Rector of Lincoln and the Commissioners tell us the English universities are not; that is to say, corporations 'of learned men devoting their lives to the cultivation of science, and the direction of academical education'. They are not 'boarding schools for youths', nor clerical seminaries; but institutions for the higher

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culture of men, in which the theological faculty is of no more importance, or prominence, than the rest ; and which are truly ' universities ', since they strive to represent and embody the totality of human knowledge, and to find room for all forms of intellectual activity.

May zealous and clear-headed reformers like Mr. Pattison succeed in their noble endeavours to shape our universities towards some such ideal as this, without losing what is valuable and distinctive in their social tone ! But until they have succeeded, a liberal education will be no more obtainable in our Oxford and Cambridge Universities than in our public schools.

If I am justified in my conception of the ideal of a liberal education ; and if what I have said about the existing educational institutions of the country is also true, it is clear that the two have no sort of relation to one another ; that the best of our schools and the most complete of our university trainings give but a narrow, one-sided, and essentially illiberal education—while the worst give what is really next to no education at all. The South London Working-Men's College could not copy any of these institutions if it would ; I am bold enough to express the conviction that it ought not, if it could.

For what is wanted is the reality and not the mere name of a liberal education ; and this College must steadily set before itself the ambition to be able to give that education sooner or later. At present we are but beginning, sharpening our educational tools, as it were, and, except a modicum of physical science, we are not able to offer much more than is to be found in an ordinary school.

Moral and social science—one of the greatest and most fruitful of our future classes, I hope—at present lacks only one thing in our programme, and that is a teacher. A considerable want no doubt ; but it must be recollected that it is much better to want a teacher than to want the desire to learn.

Further, we need what, for want of a better name, I must call Physical Geography. What I mean is that

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which the Germans call '*Erdkunde*'. It is a description of the earth, of its place and relation to other bodies; of its general structure, and of its great features—winds, tides, mountains, plains: of the chief forms of the vegetable and animal worlds, of the varieties of man. It is the peg upon which the greatest quantity of useful and entertaining scientific information can be suspended.

Literature is not upon the College programme; but I hope some day to see it there. For literature is the greatest of all sources of refined pleasure, and one of the great uses of liberal education is to enable us to enjoy that pleasure. There is scope enough for the purposes of liberal education in the study of the rich treasures of our own language alone. All that is needed is direction, and the cultivation of a refined taste by attention to sound criticism. But there is no reason why French and German should not be mastered sufficiently to read what is worth reading in those languages with pleasure and with profit.

And finally, by and by, we must have History; treated not as a succession of battles and dynasties; not as a series of biographies; not as evidence that Providence has always been on the side of either Whigs or Tories; but as the development of man in times past, and in other conditions than our own.

But, as it is one of the principles of our College to be self-supporting, the public must lead, and we must follow, in these matters. If my hearers take to heart what I have said about liberal education, they will desire these things, and I doubt not we shall be able to supply them. But you must wait till the demand is made.

## *Dreamthorp*

ALEXANDER SMITH

**I**T matters not to relate how or when I became a denizen of Dreamthorp; it will be sufficient to say that I am not a born native, but that I came to reside in it a good while ago now. The several towns and villages in which, in my time, I have pitched a tent did not please, for one obscure reason or another: this one was too large, t'other too small; but when, on a summer evening about the hour of eight, I first beheld Dreamthorp, with its westward-looking windows painted by sunset, its children playing in the single straggling street, the mothers knitting at the open doors, the fathers standing about in long white blouses, chatting or smoking; the great tower of the ruined castle rising high into the rosy air, with a whole troop of swallows—by distance made as small as gnats—skimming about its rents and fissures;—when I first beheld all this, I felt instinctively that my knapsack might be taken off my shoulders, that my tired feet might wander no more, that at last, on the planet, I had found a home. From that evening I have dwelt here, and the only journey I am like now to make, is the very inconsiderable one, so far at least as distance is concerned, from the house in which I live to the graveyard beside the ruined castle. There, with the former inhabitants of the place, I trust to sleep quietly enough, and nature will draw over our heads her coverlet of green sod, and tenderly tuck us in, as a mother her sleeping ones, so that no sound from the world shall ever reach us, and no sorrow trouble us any more.

The village stands far inland; and the streams that trot through the soft green valleys all about have as little knowledge of the sea, as the three-years' child of the storms

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and passions of manhood. The surrounding country is smooth and green, full of undulations; and pleasant country roads strike through it in every direction, bound for distant towns and villages, yet in no hurry to reach them. On these roads the lark in summer is continually heard; nests are plentiful in the hedges and dry ditches; and on the grassy banks, and at the feet of the bowed dikes, the blue-eyed speedwell smiles its benison on the passing wayfarer. On these roads you may walk for a year and encounter nothing more remarkable than the country cart, troops of tawny children from the woods, laden with primroses, and at long intervals—for people in this district live to a ripe age—a black funeral creeping in from some remote hamlet; and to this last the people reverently doff their hats and stand aside. Death does not walk about here often, but when he does, he receives as much respect as the squire himself. Everything round one is unhurried, quiet, moss-grown, and orderly. Season follows in the track of season, and one year can hardly be distinguished from another. Time should be measured here by the silent dial, rather than by the ticking clock, or by the chimes of the church. Dreamthorp can boast of a respectable antiquity, and in it the trade of the builder is unknown. Ever since I remember, not a single stone has been laid on the top of another. The castle, inhabited now by jackdaws and starlings, is old; the chapel which adjoins it is older still; and the lake behind both, and in which their shadows sleep, is, I suppose, as old as Adam. A fountain in the market-place, all mouths and faces and curious arabesques—as dry, however, as the castle moat—has a tradition connected with it; and a great noble riding through the street one day several hundred years ago, was shot from a window by a man whom he had injured. The death of this noble is the chief link which connects the place with authentic history. The houses are old, and remote dates may yet be deciphered on the stones above the doors; the apple-trees are mossed and ancient; countless generations of sparrows have bred in the thatched roofs, and thereon have chirped out their

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lives. In every room of the place men have been born, men have died. On Dreamthorp centuries have fallen, and have left no more trace than have last winter's snowflakes. This commonplace sequence and flowing on of life is immeasurably affecting. That winter morning, when Charles lost his head in front of the banqueting-hall of his own palace, the icicles hung from the eaves of the houses here, and the clown kicked the snowballs from his clouted shoon, and thought but of his supper when, at three o'clock, the red sun set in the purple mist. On that Sunday in June while Waterloo was going on, the gossips, after morning service, stood on the country roads discussing agricultural prospects, without the slightest suspicion that the day passing over their heads would be a famous one in the calendar. Battles have been fought, kings have died, history has transacted itself; but, all unheeding and untouched, Dreamthorp has watched apple-trees redden, and wheat ripen, and smoked its pipe, and quaffed its mug of beer, and rejoiced over its new-born children, and with proper solemnity carried its dead to the churchyard. As I gaze on the village of my adoption, I think of many things very far removed, and seem to get closer to them. The last setting sun that Shakespeare saw reddened the windows here, and struck warmly on the faces of the hinds coming home from the fields. The mighty storm that raged while Cromwell lay a-dying made all the oak-woods groan round about here, and tore the thatch from the very roofs I gaze upon. When I think of this, I can almost, so to speak, lay my hand on Shakespeare and on Cromwell. These poor walls were contemporaries of both, and I find something affecting in the thought. The mere soil is, of course, far older than either, but *it* does not touch one in the same way. A wall is the creation of a human hand, soil is not.

This place suits my whim, and I like it better year after year. As with everything else, since I began to love it I find it gradually growing beautiful. Dreamthorp—a castle, a chapel, a lake, a straggling strip of grey houses, with a blue film of smoke over all—lies

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embosomed in emerald. Summer, with its daisies, runs up to every cottage door. From the little height where I am now sitting, I see it beneath me. Nothing could be more peaceful. The wind and the birds fly over it. A passing sunbeam makes brilliant a white gable-end, and brings out the colours of the blossomed apple-tree beyond, and disappears. I see figures in the street, but hear them not. The hands on the church clock seem always pointing to one hour. Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine. I make a frame of my fingers, and look at my picture. On the walls of the next Academy's Exhibition will hang nothing half so beautiful!

My village is, I think, a special favourite of summer's. Every window-sill in it she touches with colour and fragrance; everywhere she wakens the drowsy murmurs of the hives; every place she scents with apple-blossom. Traces of her hand are to be seen on the weir beside the ruined mill; and even the canal, along which the barges come and go, has a great white water-lily asleep on its olive-coloured face. Never was velvet on a monarch's robe so gorgeous as the green mosses that be-ruff the roofs of farm and cottage, when the sunbeam slants on them and goes. The old road out towards the common, and the hoary dikes that might have been built in the reign of Alfred, have not been forgotten by the generous adorning season; for every fissure has its mossy cushion, and the old blocks themselves are washed by the loveliest grey-green lichens in the world, and the large loose stones lying on the ground have gathered to themselves the peaceablest mossy coverings. Some of these have not been disturbed for a century. Summer has adorned my village as gaily, and taken as much pleasure in the task, as the people of old, when Elizabeth was queen, took in the adornment of the May-pole against a summer festival. And, just think, not only Dreamthorp, but every English village she has made beautiful after one fashion or another—making vivid green the hill slope on which straggling white Welsh hamlets hang right opposite the sea; drowning in apple-blossom the red Sussex

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ones in the fat valley. And think, once more, every spear of grass in England she has touched with a livelier green; the crest of every bird she has burnished; every old wall between the four seas has received her mossy and licheny attentions; every nook in every forest she has sown with pale flowers, every marsh she has dashed with the fires of the marigold. And in the wonderful night the moon knows, she hangs—the planet on which so many millions of us fight, and sin, and agonize, and die—a sphere of glow-worm light.

Having discoursed so long about Dreamthorp, it is but fair that I should now introduce you to her lions. These are, for the most part, of a commonplace kind; and I am afraid that, if you wish to find romance in them, you must bring it with you. I might speak of the old church-tower, or of the churchyard beneath it, in which the village holds its dead, each resting-place marked by a simple stone, on which is inscribed the name and age of the sleeper, and a Scripture text beneath, in which live our hopes of immortality. But, on the whole, perhaps it will be better to begin with the canal, which wears on its olive-coloured face the big white water-lily already chronicled. Such a secluded place is Dreamthorp that the railway does not come near, and the canal is the only thing that connects it with the world. It stands high, and from it the undulating country may be seen stretching away into the grey of distance, with hills and woods, and stains of smoke which mark the sites of villages. Every now and then a horse comes staggering along the towing-path, trailing a sleepy barge filled with merchandise. A quiet, indolent life these bargemen lead in the summer days. One lies stretched at his length on the sun-heated plank; his comrade sits smoking in the little dog-hutch, which I suppose he calls a cabin. Silently they come and go; silently the wooden bridge lifts to let them through. The horse stops at the bridge-house for a drink, and there I like to talk a little with the men. They serve instead of a newspaper, and retail with great willingness the news they have picked up in their progress from town to town. . I am told they sometimes marvel



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who the old gentleman is who accosts them from beneath a huge umbrella in the sun, and that they think him either very wise or very foolish. Not in the least unnatural! We are great friends, I believe—evidence of which they occasionally exhibit by requesting me to disburse a trifle for drink-money. This canal is a great haunt of mine of an evening. The water hardly invites one to bathe in it, and a delicate stomach might suspect the flavour of the eels caught therein; yet, to my thinking, it is not in the least destitute of beauty. A barge trailing up through it in the sunset is a pretty sight; and the heavenly crimsons and purples sleep quite lovingly upon its glossy ripples. Nor does the evening star disdain it, for as I walk along I see it mirrored therein as clearly as in the waters of the Mediterranean itself.

The old castle and chapel already alluded to are, perhaps, to a stranger, the points of attraction in Dreamthorp. Back from the houses is the lake, on the green sloping banks of which, with broken windows and tombs, the ruins stand. As it is noon, and the weather is warm, let us go and sit on a turret. Here, on these very steps, as old ballads tell, a queen sat once, day after day, looking southward for the light of returning spears. I bethink me that yesterday, no further gone, I went to visit a consumptive shoemaker; seated here I can single out his very house, nay, the very window of the room in which he is lying. On that straw roof might the raven alight, and flap his sable wings. There, at this moment, is the supreme tragedy being enacted. A woman is weeping there, and little children are looking on with a sore bewilderment. Before nightfall the poor peaked face of the bowed artisan will have gathered its ineffable peace, and the widow will be led away from the bedside by the tenderness of neighbours, and the cries of the orphan brood will be stilled. And yet this present indubitable suffering and loss does not touch me like the sorrow of the woman of the ballad, the phantom probably of a minstrel's brain. The shoemaker will be forgotten—I shall be forgotten; and long after visitors will sit here and look out on the landscape and murmur the

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simple lines. But why do death and dying obtrude themselves at the present moment? On the turret opposite, about the distance of a gunshot, is as pretty a sight as eye could wish to see. Two young people, strangers apparently, have come to visit the ruin. Neither the ballad queen, nor the shoemaker down yonder, whose respirations are getting shorter and shorter, touches them in the least. They are merry and happy, and the greybeard turret has not the heart to thrust a foolish moral upon them. They would not thank him if he did, I daresay. Perhaps they could not understand him. Time enough! Twenty years hence they will be able to sit down at his feet, and count griefs with him, and tell him tale for tale. Human hearts get ruinous in so much less time than stone walls and towers. See, the young man has thrown himself down at the girl's feet on a little space of grass. In her scarlet cloak she looks like a blossom springing out of a crevice on the ruined steps. He gives her a flower, and she bows her face down over it almost to her knees. What did the flower say? Is it to hide a blush? He looks delighted; and I almost fancy I see a proud colour on his brow. As I gaze, these young people make for me a perfect idyl. The generous, ungrudging sun, the melancholy ruin, decked, like mad Lear, with the flowers and ivies of forgetfulness and grief, and between them, sweet and evanescent, human truth and love!

Love!—does it yet walk the world, or is it imprisoned in poems and romances? Has not the circulating library become the sole home of the passion? Is love not become the exclusive property of novelists and playwrights, to be used by them only for professional purposes? Surely, if the men I see are lovers, or ever have been lovers, they would be nobler than they are. The knowledge that he is beloved should—*must* make a man tender, gentle, upright, pure. While yet a youngster in a jacket, I can remember falling desperately in love with a young lady several years my senior—after the fashion of youngsters in jackets. Could I have fibbed in these days? Could I have betrayed a comrade? Could I have stolen eggs or callow young from the nest? Could

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I have stood quietly by and seen the weak or the maimed bullied? Nay, verily! In these absurd days she lighted up the whole world for me. To sit in the same room with her was like the happiness of perpetual holiday; when she asked me to run a message for her, or to do any, the slightest, service for her, I felt as if a patent of nobility were conferred on me. I kept my passion to myself, like a cake, and nibbled it in private. Juliet was several years my senior, and had a lover—was, in point of fact, actually engaged; and, in looking back, I can remember I was too much in love to feel the slightest twinge of jealousy. I remember also seeing Romeo for the first time, and thinking him a greater man than Caesar or Napoleon. The worth I credited him with, the cleverness, the goodness, the everything! He awed me by his manner and bearing. He accepted that girl's love coolly and as a matter of course: it put him no more about than a crown and sceptre puts about a king. What I would have given my life to possess—being only fourteen, it was not much to part with after all—he wore lightly, as he wore his gloves or his cane. It did not seem a bit too good for him. His self-possession appalled me. If I had seen him take the sun out of the sky, and put it into his breeches' pocket, I don't think I should have been in the least degree surprised. Well, years after, when I had discarded my passion with my jacket, I have assisted this middle-aged Romeo home from a roystering wine-party, and heard him hiccup out his marital annoyances, with the strangest remembrances of old times, and the strangest deductions therefrom. Did that man with the idiotic laugh and the blurred utterance ever love? Was he ever capable of loving? I protest I have my doubts. But where are my young people? Gone! So it is always. We begin to moralize and look wise, and Beauty, who is something of a coquette, and of an exacting turn of mind, and likes attentions, gets disgusted with our wisdom or our stupidity, and goes off in a huff. Let the baggage go!

The ruined chapel adjoins the ruined castle on which I am now sitting, and is evidently a building of much

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older date. It is a mere shell now. It is quite roofless, ivy covers it in part; the stone tracery of the great western window is yet intact, but the coloured glass is gone with the splendid vestments of the abbot, the fuming incense, the chanting choirs, and the patient, sad-eyed monks, who muttered *Aves*, shrived guilt, and illuminated missals. Time was when this place breathed actual benedictions, and was a home of active peace. At present it is visited only by the stranger, and delights but the antiquary. The village people have so little respect for it, that they do not even consider it haunted. There are several tombs in the interior bearing knights' escutcheons, which time has sadly defaced. The dust you stand upon is noble. Earls have been brought here in dinted mail from battle, and earls' wives from the pangs of child-bearing. The last trumpet will break the slumber of a right honourable company. One of the tombs—the most perfect of all in point of preservation—I look at often, and try to conjecture what it commemorates. With all my fancies, I can get no further than the old story of love and death. There, on the slab, the white figures sleep; marble hands, folded in prayer, on marble breasts. And I like to think that he was brave, she beautiful; that, although the monument is worn by time, and sullied by the stains of the weather, the qualities which it commemorates—husbandly and wifely affection, courtesy, courage, knightly scorn of wrong and falsehood, meekness, penitence, charity—are existing yet somewhere, recognizable by each other. The man who in this world can keep the whiteness of his soul, is not likely to lose it in any other.

In summer I spent a good deal of time floating about the lake. The landing-place to which my boat is tethered is ruinous, like the chapel and palace, and my embarkation causes quite a stir in the sleepy little village. Small boys leave their games and mud-pies, and gather round in silence; they have seen me get off a hundred times, but their interest in the matter seems always new. Not unfrequently an idle cobbler, in red nightcap and leathern apron, leans on a broken stile, and honours my proceed-

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ings with his attention. I shoot off, and the human knot dissolves. The lake contains three islands, each with a solitary tree, and on these islands the swans breed. I feed the birds daily with bits of bread. See, one comes gliding towards me, with superbly arched neck, to receive its customary alms! How wildly beautiful its motions! How haughtily it begs! The green pasture lands run down to the edge of the water, and into it in the afternoons the red kine wade and stand knee-deep in their shadows, surrounded by troops of flies. Patiently the honest creatures abide the attacks of their tormentors. Now one swishes itself with its tail—now its neighbour flaps a huge ear. I draw my oars alongside, and let my boat float at its own will. The soft blue heavenly abysses, the wandering streams of vapour, the long beaches of rippled cloud, are glassed and repeated in the lake. Dreamthorp is silent as a picture, the voices of the children are mute; and the smoke from the houses, the blue pillars all sloping in one angle, float upward as if in sleep. Grave and stern the old castle rises from its emerald banks, which long ago came down to the lake in terrace on terrace, gay with fruits and flowers, and with stone nymph and satyrs hid in every nook. Silent and empty enough to-day! A flock of daws suddenly bursts out from a turret, and round and round they wheel, as if in panic. Has some great scandal exploded? Has a conspiracy been discovered? Has a revolution broken out? The excitement has subsided, and one of them, perched on the old banner-staff, chatters confidentially to himself as he, sideways, eyes the world beneath him. Floating about thus, time passes swiftly, for, before I know where I am, the kine have withdrawn from the lake to couch on the herbage, while one on a little height is lowing for the milkmaid and her pails. Along the road I see the labourers coming home for supper, while the sun setting behind me makes the village windows blaze; and so I take out my oars, and pull leisurely through waters faintly flushed with evening colours.

I do not think that Mr. Buckle could have written his

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*History of Civilization* in Dreamthorp, because in it books, conversation, and the other appurtenances of intellectual life, are not to be procured. I am acquainted with birds, and the building of nests—with wild-flowers, and the seasons in which they blow—but with the big world far away, with what men and women are thinking, and doing, and saying, I am acquainted only through the *Times*, and the occasional magazine or review, sent by friends whom I have not looked upon for years, but by whom, it seems, I am not yet forgotten. The village has but few intellectual wants, and the intellectual supply is strictly measured by the demand. Still there is something. Down in the village, and opposite the curiously-carved fountain, is a schoolroom which can accommodate a couple of hundred people on a pinch. There are our public meetings held. Musical entertainments have been given there by a single performer. In that schoolroom last winter an American biologist terrified the villagers, and, to their simple understandings, mingled up the next world with this. Now and again some rare bird of an itinerant lecturer covers dead walls with posters, yellow and blue, and to that schoolroom we flock to hear him. His rounded periods the eloquent gentleman devolves amidst a respectful silence. His audience do not understand him, but they see that the clergyman does, and the doctor does; and so they are content, and look as attentive and wise as possible. Then, in connexion with the schoolroom, there is a public library, where books are exchanged once a month. This library is a kind of Greenwich Hospital for disabled novels and romances. Each of these books has been in the wars; some are unquestionable antiques. The tears of three generations have fallen upon their dusky pages. The heroes and the heroines are of another age than ours. Sir Charles Grandison is standing with his hat under his arm. Tom Jones plops from the tree into the water, to the infinite distress of Sophia. Moses comes home from market with his stock of shagreen spectacles. Lovers, warriors, and villains—as dead to the present generation of readers as

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Cambyases—are weeping, fighting, and intriguing. These books, tattered and torn as they are, are read with delight to-day. The viands are celestial if set forth on a dingy tablecloth. The gaps and chasms which occur in pathetic or perilous chapters are felt to be personal calamities. It is with a certain feeling of tenderness that I look upon these books; I think of the dead fingers that have turned over the leaves, of the dead eyes that have travelled along the lines. An old novel has a history of its own. When fresh and new, and before it had breathed its secret, it lay on my lady's table. She killed the weary day with it, and when night came it was placed beneath her pillow. At the seaside a couple of foolish heads have bent over it, hands have touched and tingled, and it has heard vows and protestations as passionate as any its pages contained. Coming down in the world, Cinderella in the kitchen has blubbered over it by the light of a surreptitious candle, conceiving herself the while the magnificent Georgiana, and Lord Mordaunt, Georgiana's lover, the pot-boy round the corner. Tied up with many a dingy brother, the auctioneer knocks the bundle down to the bidder of a few pence, and it finds its way to the quiet cove of some village library, where with some difficulty—as if from want of teeth, and with numerous interruptions—as if from lack of memory, it tells its old stories, and wakes tears, and blushes, and laughter as of yore. Thus it spends its age, and in a few years it will become unintelligible, and then, in the dust-bin, like poor human mortals in the grave, it will rest from all its labours. It is impossible to estimate the benefit which such books have conferred. How often have they loosed the chain of circumstance! What unfamiliar tears—what unfamiliar laughter they have caused! What chivalry and tenderness they have infused into rustic loves! Of what weary hours they have cheated and beguiled their readers! The big, solemn history books are in excellent preservation; the story books are defaced and frayed, and their out-of-elbows condition is their pride, and the best justification of their existence. They are tashed, as roses are, by being eagerly handled and smelt. I observe, too, that

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the most ancient romances are not in every case the most severely worn. It is the pace that tells in horses, men, and books. There are Nestors wonderfully hale ; there are juveniles in a state of dilapidation. One of the youngest books, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, is absolutely falling to pieces. That book, like Italy, is possessor of the fatal gift ; but happily, in its case, everything can be rectified by a new edition. We have buried warriors and poets, princes and queens, but no one of these was followed to the grave by sincerer mourners than was little Nell.

Besides the itinerant lecturer, and the permanent library, we have the Sunday sermon. These sum up the intellectual aids and furtherances of the whole place. We have a church and a chapel, and I attend both. The Dreamthorp people are Dissenters, for the most part ; why, I never could understand ; because dissent implies a certain intellectual effort. But Dissenters they are, and Dissenters they are likely to remain. In an ungainly building, filled with hard gaunt pews, without an organ, without a touch of colour in the windows, with nothing to stir the imagination or the devotional sense, the simple people worship. On Sunday, they are put upon a diet of spiritual bread-and-water. Personally, I should desire more generous food. But the labouring people listen attentively, till once they fall asleep, and they wake up to receive the benediction with a feeling of having done their duty. They know they ought to go to chapel, and they go. I go likewise, from habit, although I have long ago lost the power of following a discourse. In my pew, and whilst the clergyman is going on, I think of the strangest things--of the tree at the window, of the congregation of the dead outside, of the wheatfields and the cornfields beyond and all around. And the odd thing is, that it is during sermon only that my mind flies off at a tangent and busies itself with things removed from the place and the circumstances. Whenever it is finished, fancy returns from her wanderings, and I am alive to the objects around me. The clergyman knows my humour, and is good Christian enough to forgive me ; and he



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smiles good-humouredly when I ask him to let me have the chapel keys, that I may enter, when in the mood, and preach a sermon to myself. To my mind, an empty chapel is impressive; a crowded one, comparatively a commonplace affair. Alone, I could choose my own text, and my silent discourse would not be without its practical applications.

An idle life I live in this place, as the world counts it; but then I have the satisfaction of differing from the world as to the meaning of idleness. A windmill twirling its arms all day is admirable only when there is corn to grind. Twirling its arms for the mere barren pleasure of twirling them, or for the sake of looking busy, does not deserve any rapturous pæan of praise. I must be made happy after my own fashion, not after the fashion of other people. Here I can live as I please, here I can throw the reins on the neck of my whim. Here I play with my own thoughts; here I ripen for the grave.

## De Senectute

### A DIALOGUE IN A COLLEGE GARDEN

FREDERIC HARRISON

SCENE. *The Gardens of St. Boniface, Oxbridge.*

(1) *The Rev. ONESIMUS SENIOR, D.D., former Rector of Felix-in-the-Weald.*

(2) JOHN OLDHAM, M.A., College Don, Dean.

(3) TOM RIPPER, a former University Blue.

J. OLDHAM. We rejoice to find that you can come up to our feast, Rector, and look at the old place and the new men. Why, your degree must have been in the early 'fifties! How puzzled you must be with all the changes you see around—and, I fear, how much you may be shocked!

O. SENIOR. Puzzled at times, my dear Dean, till I have found out more of the facts—but not a bit shocked. Pray don't call me Rector. After fifty years in my quiet Rectory, and nearly seventy years of parish work, I have resigned office, duty and toil, and have settled in peacefulness on a small bit of land which belonged to my father. I have no work, no task, no responsibility, no care, except to look back—and then to look forward. I am *functus officio—rude jam donatus*. You could not imagine how entirely tranquil is life when a man has no task pressing on him to be done—indeed when, in the very last hours of his life, there is no task which he can look to complete—none which he ought even to attempt. For those who have worked their hardest for the six days of the week, it is a moral duty—nay a sacred duty—to rest on the seventh day—and only to think of all that has been—and on all that is to come.

J. OLDHAM. But you, who have been so hard a worker all your life, must feel the need of an aim to

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satisfy your energy. You, of all our men, can hardly rest with mere *otium*—even *cum dignitate*, which indeed you have in full measure, as you know.

O. SENIOR. Well! I have now a life of restfulness—but not of idleness. I can still do something, if only it be to offer advice, to warn men of dangers ahead. From the hill-top of our long years of experience, we ancients survey the ground both behind us as well as in front of us. As we are not absorbed in any pressing problem to be solved in the immediate present, we can take longer and wider views, and we have outgrown the heat of our strenuous days.

J. OLDHAM. Not, I trust, that you repeat the aphorisms of a Chorus of *Gerontes* in the play of Euripides on which I have just been lecturing.

O. SENIOR. Not a bit of it—more in the vein of Athena or Artemis, when she appears above the temple to clear up the catastrophe.

J. OLDHAM. And you find that the younger ones listen to your advice?

O. SENIOR. Now and then, yes! Perhaps our words may seem to them to come true after a time. But we retired veterans have no direct or personal aim to attain. It is enough that we do our best to put things fairly and relieve our own spirits. We don't pretend to be prophets—nor even mentors, and we have nothing to gain by our talking. But do not suppose that we are indolent observers. We watch the tremendous stream of events as they rush towards the unknown, as men who have seen the various rivers which long ago joined to swell the volume of to-day.

J. OLDHAM. And this continual observation of the world around you gives you adequate occupation for your thought—which we all know is far from obsolescent.

O. SENIOR. No! it serves to keep the mind alert with incessant new conditions to observe. But, of course, books fill the time of a very old man much more than they ever did in his busy life.

J. OLDHAM. Books, no doubt! And you still keep

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up with the new books to which the war seems to have given a spasmodic vitality?

O. SENIOR. God forbid! For my part I am spared the trouble of even casting my eye over the new stuff—above all, over new novels. The laudations of the publishers of each ‘epoch-making romance,’ each ‘novel of the age,’ leave me cold. I would as soon listen to the chatter in a crowded tramcar or the smoking-room of a country club, as read the modern up-to-date novel of what they call *Life*. I can read the old romances again and again still. I suppose I read Scott and Fielding, Jane Austen and Trollope, year after year—and I often turn back to Thackeray, Disraeli, Dickens, even Smollett, if I feel bored or sleepy. I have done quite enough of modern French novels. But, after all, I get along with a very moderate resort to fiction—at least of modern times. It forms but the ‘savoury’ to my *menu* in literature. The complex experience of long life passed in various tasks reveals to us more than to the young the profound mysteries of human nature, as painted by the masters of humour—Aristophanes, Cervantes, Molière. I never open one of these immortals without finding ores from the bed-rock of humanity that I had forgotten or never noted.

J. OLDHAM. Surely, your Greek does not last you well enough to read Aristophanes in the original?

O. SENIOR. Perhaps not, as a Scholar would read him. But I now read the wonderful version of my old contemporary B. B. Rogers, with the Greek on one page and the English in verse on the opposite page. I don’t care a fig for the curious compounds and the Attic slang and indescribable condiments which puzzled us so much at school and college. I take Rogers’ word for the meaning—and I can enjoy the fun, the wild lampooning, and the Pindaric lyrics of the greatest of comedians—without pulling out my Liddell and Scott.

J. OLDHAM. And do you read *Don Quixote* too in Spanish?

O. SENIOR. No! I have tried it—but it is difficult. And I love Italian too much to take kindly to Spanish,

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which seems to me a dialect of Italian like Dorsetshire English. There are excellent versions of *Don Quixote*, and our tongue serves perfectly to render the Spanish idiom. If they would print a copy with Spanish on one page and English on the other, I would use it. But Cervantes has not the indescribable grace of words that glows in the purest Attic; and an English version of Cervantes' Spanish does not lose so much as does the best English version of Aristophanes' Greek.

J. OLDHAM. And do you care for any version of Molière?

O. SENIOR. *Proh pudor!* It is felony and treason to translate Molière. There again, half the glory of the poet is in *form*. You could no more translate the *Précieuses* than you could translate Horace's *Odes*. Those only really penetrate into the secret of Molière who can recall the plays at the Français and remember Coquelin, Delaunay, and Got, Madeleine Brohan, and Croixette. Coquelin himself told me that, of all his parts, he enjoyed *Mascarille* the most. And as I read my Molière again to-day, the *verve* and sparkle of those quips and repartees still ring in my ears after fifty and sixty years have passed since I feasted at those *cenæ deorum* in the historic *Maison de Molière*.

J. OLDHAM. But what about tragedy? Do you find that too gloomy for you?

O. SENIOR. Just the reverse! We old ones have seen so many tragedies in the world—such terrific *peripeties* in the high and mighty—such incredible reverses of fortune—such acts of Fate or Providence—we have known too such tragedies in our own homes and in those of friends and neighbours—that at the end of life, of all men we seniors are taught to recognize that human society is compacted of tragedies. The tragedies of the great poets reveal the tragedies which in lesser degrees are passing—it may be obscurely—in many a household, to the eye so prosperous and happy. Human life is ever playing out, in very minor keys and in very narrow fields, the eternal human comedy—the inevitable human tragedy. The long and crowded experience of old age

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is more open to understand both than is the eager *joie de vivre* of youth. Tragedy, you know, purifies the soul by the presentment of the terrible and the pitiful. For myself, I never have been so thrilled by great tragedy in my early days as I am now in these last days. To me, it is no longer poetry : it is the gospel of man's destiny.

J. OLDHAM. So you read your Shakespeare as much as ever ?

O. SENIOR. Indeed much more—though I choose the plays now more carefully. I cannot believe that he always did his best. I am sure he let his name stand for not a little stuff which he knew was unworthy of him. He felt his teeming mind so boiling over with ideas, that he cared not if some of them went running to waste. His was the greatest poetic force ever given to man : but I cannot admit that he produced the greatest of all tragedies.

J. OLDHAM. Then who did produce them ?

O. SENIOR. For pure—perfect—sublime tragedy, I hold by Æschylus. And Sophocles was not far behind him, as Aristotle suggests of the *Edipus*. To me the Trilogv of *Oresteia* has a massive grandeur, a concentric symmetry, that even *Lear* and *Macbeth* do not reach. And *Promethius* soars into an empyrean of imagination which the sixteenth century could not touch—much less can the twentieth century touch it—nor even comprehend it.

J. OLDHAM. And your chief reading now is with Greek drama ?

O. SENIOR. Quite so ! I am too poor a scholar to read the originals without all the help I can find. So what with Jebb, and Verrall, and Murray, and Dr. Way, and various versions in prose and verse, I have managed in these later and more leisured years to work through nearly all that is left of Attic tragedy. How magnificent is the roll of those organ tones in iambic ! Did human speech ever sound such bewitching harmonies ! With what raptures do the chorus ring forth, as they circle round the orchestra, chanting hymns such as eagles might chant, if they had the sweet voices of larks !

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J. OLDHAM. Exceedingly beautiful in music ; yet the sense too often is nothing but commonplace and goody-goody truism.

O. SENIOR. True ! but remember that these lines are the words of musical chants. No one expects to hear original ideas in the *libretto* of a modern opera. Much of the choral strophes was equivalent to the trumpets, drums and cymbals which point the tramp of a soldier's march. The chorus of Attic tragedy serves to supply the lyrical element which our Elizabethan dramatists flung recklessly into the dialogue—not seldom to the injury of the *action* and to delay the catastrophe or adorn it with needless flowers. Even Macbeth and Othello, whilst brandishing their murderous weapons, talk superb poetry which might serve for an elegy.

J. OLDHAM. But you do not neglect Euripides—my favourite—I hope ?

O. SENIOR. I used to be unjust to Euripides, I confess, perhaps from my old delight in the poetic duel in the *Frogs*. But of late I have been turning again to Euripides—with the help, of course, of the excellent new versions we have got—Murray's and the rest. I can see why the ancients, as indeed did modern French and German dramatists, preferred him, and why they preserved twice as much as they preserved of Æschylus and Sophocles. I see why this was. He often degraded the majesty of great tragedy into the excitements of sensational thrill. He sacrificed the unity and awe of tragedy by piling up a variety of startling surprises such as in *Ion*, *Hecuba*, *Heracles*—just as Seneca and the Elizabethan *Renaissance* loved to do. Euripides, like Seneca, like Marlowe, like Webster, can pander to the lust for blood and torture.

J. OLDHAM. Oh ! there is plenty of horror in Æschylus and Sophocles.

O. SENIOR. Yes ! Prometheus and Clytemnestra, Œdipus and Antigone, present the horrible—but it has a halo of the awful. It is sanctified with a divine judgment like the horror of the Crucifixion. But in Euripides the horror is piled up double and triple, and too often smacks

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o that beastly thing they call the cinema—the grave, the very dust-hole of the drama. And his catastrophe is jumbled up with a lot of logical wrangling that is trivial when it is not sceptical.

J. OLDHAM. And do you not care for his exquisite lyrics and the pathos of his wonderfully varied crises of suffering?

O. SENIOR. Do not mistake me. I revel in them. Quite lately, when laid on my sofa by an accident, I have soothed a lonely time by reading over his masterpieces with keen enjoyment. I see now why Euripides was *the* tragic poet to cultured readers both ancient and modern.

J. OLDHAM. But you have plenty of other reading besides tragedies and comedies, as we all know from some lectures of yours that have reached us.

O. SENIOR. Oh yes! all forms of real literature attract me—all the great books of the world. I suppose I have managed in the last ten or twenty years, when I had curates and my clerical work became less severe, to rub up my Classics—Homer and Virgil; Sappho, Theocritus and Catullus; Lucretius, Horace and Juvenal.

J. OLDHAM. Well! and as for the moderns; you do not bar them, I hope?

O. SENIOR. I bar none, my dear Dean. Dante and the great Italians who follow him, *Fabliaux*, *Morte d'Arthur*, old ballads, Milton, Calderon, Corneille, Cowper, Burns, Byron and Wordsworth, are the books I take up most often.

J. OLDHAM. What! not Keats, Shelley, Tennyson and Swinburne?

O. SENIOR. All these of course! You might as well ask me if I do not sometimes open my Bible. The best nineteenth-century men are to be 'taken as read' in any decent library; and certainly in my library they are read. And I keep at my bedside, with my Hymn-book, a copy of the *Golden Treasury*—first edition 1861—not the enlarged edition with the moderns—which rather blunts the perfect aroma of the original choice.

J. OLDHAM. And don't you enjoy the *Oxford Book of Verse* of 1901? .



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O. SENIOR. Yes ! I have that by my side too. But it is rather a study in English poetic literature than a selection of the best. There are not 883 lyrics in our poetry which are worth frequent re-reading. One-half of those in the Oxford book rather spoil the effect of the rest. Some are too lengthy ; others are obsolete ; one or two rather gross. No ! I hold by the *Golden Treasury* of 1861, and my well-thumbed, soiled copy in limp calf, always to be put in my case if I leave home. Palgrave has less than 300 lyrics in his book : and that is quite enough for daily use as a morning hymn, when one does not want researches in forgotten literature.

J. OLDHAM. Why, my dear friend, in spite of your eighteen *lustra* you seem to have got through a lot of reading. It is quite wonderful ! Tell us your secret for it.

O. SENIOR. Not wonderful at all—there is no secret. It is simply the choice of the best books—and keeping clear of the second-best, and altogether clear of the everyday rubbish on which so many men and women waste their time. I thank Providence that my eyes are as fresh as ever, and serve me at all times and for every use. I am no great reader : I never was. I am neither scholar, nor critic nor bookworm. I am a humble pupil of the really great readers such as Jowett and Pattison, Monro and Jebb, in my college days, or Morley, Saintsbury and Gosse to-day. In my clerical days of old, what with sermons, and parish work, and our village club and desultory lectures, I had no spare time to read more than was necessary for my practical tasks. It is only in the last twenty years of my life that reading has been to me my chief solace, the only consolation in bereavement, the support of my weakening limbs. But I can tell you this—to you, Dean, in mid life, to you, Tom, in your young life, it is only in the serene haven of extreme old age, when all earthly cares seem like the rough seas out of which we are now passed, that the glory of great literature comes into the soul. We ancients, who seem to you so useless and so incapable of happiness, really live with the mighty ones of old. They seem to be chanting a *requiem* specially

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for us—*requiem æternam dant nobis*. We pass into their Limbo as Dante does with Virgil in that fourth canto when they come into the presence of the great dead poets and hear the voice cry out—*Onorate l'altissimo poeta*. By the way, I once heard that famous line used in a pretty way. At a dinner-party a hostess offered her arm as they passed out to Robert Browning, who thought the privilege rather irregular, since a somewhat important privy councillor was of the party. '*Onorate l'altissimo poeta*' said the lady as she swept out on the arm of the author of *The Ring and the Book*. But, to be quite serious, it is we very old boys who really drink to the last drop and in full enjoyment all that is great in literature; for we only have ample leisure, no pressing work on hand; have no stuff 'just out' to waste our time on; and, above all, we see both life and literature as one great continuous whole.

J. OLDHAM. Ah! I can envy you now! How often, when I am grinding a Greek Play with my class—half of them teachable, the other half indifferent—how often I wish I could just enjoy it, without worrying over a corrupt passage and that *ἄπαξ λεγόμενον*. But surely, your plan shuts you out from all the promise of fresh beauty, original discovery, new thought. You are not so hide-bound to the living past as to take no interest in the living present, to say nothing of the future in the vast womb of this gravid age?

O. SENIOR. If that were so, I should indeed be the *mumpsimus* that some youngsters may think I am. When I said that I am not absorbed in the new books of the day, I never meant to say that I had closed down my mind, and made it a *hortus siccus* of things long finished—all now said. I do my best to understand such dominant movements as the evolution of Darwinian Evolution, the revival of metaphysics, of psychology and psychiatry, Einstein and his commentators and critics, such as Eddington, Haldane, Lodge and Wildon Carr. Above all I watch the evolution of Christian dogma and the secular interaction of religion and science.

TOM RIPPER. O, Sir, I do hope you read our new

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young poets—some who fought, and sang, and died in the great war. I knew Rupert Brooke and I have listened to many another, as he repeated the last words he ever put in rhyme.

O. SENIOR. My dear boy, I have read many of them and feel stirred by them at times, even in my dry bones. We know not what *might have been*. I wish that I could see the promise of a Shelley—or even of a Tennyson in them. There was often in some a touch of Swinburne. Yes! Perhaps many ‘a mute inglorious Milton’ died gloriously in this most cruel of all wars.

TOM R. And I fear, Sir, that you feel that we young ones are wasting our lives over games—and you would charge the general decadence to cricket, football, golf, tennis and polo?

O. SENIOR. Not I indeed! No one more heartily than I values all our manly games, especially cricket, which is moral and social discipline as much as athletic training. As I was bowler in our eleven both at school and at college, I can read of the scores to-day with some interest. ‘E’en in our ashes live the wonted fires.’ But I am old-fashioned and can remember the *first* John Lillywhite; and I still believe in the round-arm delivery which he invented. The new over-hand fling has spoilt many a good man; and the *l.b.w.* rule has mixed football with cricket. We old boys believed in *length*, not in pace: we played the ball with our arms, not with our legs. Oh, yes! You can’t have too much real cricket. What is wrong is that huge crowds gather to look at games, to howl, cheer and bet. And the crowds at boxing matches are brutes. They play no games themselves, they only get excitement and partisan passions and wax hot for their side to win. That is the old lust for *circenses* which was the decadence of Rome and Byzantium. There is no decadence in playing games: but there is in wasting time, health and money in seeing others play. That is not *sport*. It is the vulgar love of backing the winner. Gate-money is the prostitution of games.

TOM R. And you say the same of golf?

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O. SENIOR. Well! Golf is not a *game*, because the stroke of one player does not determine or affect the stroke of his opponent—as in all real games outdoor or indoor—from cricket to chess. It is a *race*, not a game. But it does not interest me. Golf came South when I was already an old man, and my Scotch friends never got me to take it up seriously. Besides which, when I tramp over a moor—and there are few in Britain that I have not tramped—I like to be free to roam, to enjoy a varied scene, to carry nothing but my own sapling, without a fellow dragging a bag of clubs after me and silyly noting me down for a duffer.

TOM R. And you have no good word for polo, which our men love?

O. SENIOR. That is an ancient and noble exercise, I grant. It is far older than any other game we play and came from Asia into Europe. It has many of the moral, as well as the physical, qualities of cricket. Nay, it has even more, in that it brings into our game the best gifts of that most generous of brutes, the horse. I used to ride an old polo pony about the parish myself. How old Galopin and I loved each other! Polo has every good thing a game can have. But alas! it can only be the play of very rich men or men from very rich families—for a polo player must have ridden from his boyhood and wants a whole stable if he is to play at all—with a lot of perfectly trained beasts. It is a beautiful sight to watch. But it must soon die out, like the tournaments of old, which ended with the passing of feudal resources and habits.

TOM R. And if cricket grounds, tennis-courts and golf links are only for the few, and polo stables too costly for this democratic age, what is left?

O. SENIOR. Why, walking on our feet in fresh air! That demands neither whole days of leisure nor any expensive ground. Woods, commons, moors, hills, mountains, sea-beaches, river banks are easily reached and open to all. This, the true form of athletic exercise, is to be found anywhere on footpath and turf. "Ἀλμα, ποδοκείην, δίσκον, ἄκοντα, παλῆν—*you know, was the*

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source of the Greek beauty of person. This kind of exercise is open to all and everywhere. The downs and cliffs and shores are in easy reach; even in our own islands, the beacons, rocks and fells are not far off. For those who can leave home, mountaineering is of all forms of sport the purest, simplest, truest. It offers no opponent to be beaten, no 'side' to win, no prize to be gained—nothing but joy in the beauties of nature, in breathing the infinite goodness of God's earth. Many a veteran owes the health and serenity of his old age to his holidays among the hills and mountains, the peaks and snows. There is no struggling to win, no record to beat, no brute to kill—there is poetry, beauty, knowledge—even devoutness of spirit and awe at the majesty of this world.

J. OLDHAM. Surely, my venerable friend, you would not condemn our fine manly sports—hunting, fowling, angling—and all those glorious forms of the chase, which have done so much to breed the bone and to steel the nerve of our manhood?

O. SENIOR. Oh! my dear Dean, I condemn nobody. I bar nothing that is honest and healthy. As to the 'Sports,' which mean the killing of brutes for amusement, I will only say that personally, to me, they do not accord with my clerical profession nor with my own taste. I know nothing about them. Let me say, on behalf of the very old, that we are now free to enjoy the air and visions of the moor, the mysterious peace of a shady glen, the swirl and babbling of a trout stream, and all the charm of the countryside for itself alone, without having our spirits stirred by the desire to kill. As to the lust of slaughter being a necessary element in athletics, I only say, as Sophocles in his ninetieth year said of Love, we very old boys are 'now free from that wild beast'.

J. OLDHAM. Think how splendidly our sporting men fought!

O. SENIOR. Of all the millions of our men—and women—who fought and worked to win the war, not one in a thousand had ever before handled a gun, mounted a horse,

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or flung a rod. *They* did their bit without 'Sport'—without any practice in killing brutes. And so one day the world will do its bit, we trust.

J. OLDFHAM. And you still enjoy Nature even in your ninetieth year?

O. SENIOR. Enjoy it? Yes! but in a simpler and less boisterous way. Of course, the mountains, the rocks, the boats, the diving, the tramps, of old days, are not for us now. I can still reach on foot one of our downs near us, and I sit for hours gazing across the distant varied scene;—pondering, remembering, adoring it all with a full heart—in perfect and unutterable peace. In the face of Nature, the sense of our bodily joys has faded to us old men, whilst the consciousness of our spiritual joys is purer and unalloyed. Old age—I tell you—is full of compensations and consolations.

J. OLDFHAM. And you still work in your garden—I know you always loved it?

O. SENIOR. Work? No! But I love it as much as ever—nay, more. I was always too busy to work myself. Busy men, with active tasks on hand, with books, or with their pen, are always too hard pressed to get as much out of their gardens as they might. But now my little patch gives me more enjoyment than ever it did of old, when some urgent duty or study would so often call me off. By the way, a clerical neighbour of mine was a botanist of great reputation and learning and he kept it up when he was well over ninety years. I am no learned gardener. It is enough for me to watch my roses and my lilies as they open, or the bunches of my vine as they begin to colour. A man finds peace under his own vine, as it was in Solomon's day. Really to enjoy flowers, fruits, trees, one must have leisure. Men having wealth, public duty, high position, or literary fame very rarely find true leisure possible for them. For us the very old, with our enforced leisure all the mysteries of flower, fruit and tree, are specially revealed. We can sit, without distinct thought or pressing care, quite alone, in a retired grove, with a sense of rest that few younger men can know. You

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remember Andrew Marvell's magical poem *Thoughts in a Garden* :

Casting the body's vest aside  
My soul into the boughs does glide ;  
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,  
Then whets and claps its silver wings.

It is given to us very old ones thus to be incorporate  
with the peace of Nature—

While all the flowers and trees do close  
To weave the garlands of repose.

J. OLDDHAM. From all your experience of life then, my dear friend, you would say that extreme age is not the 'labour and sorrow' that the Psalmist tells us.

O. SENIOR. Science, temperance and good sense have greatly enlarged human life since David's day. We all know many men, both in public and in private careers, who, long past fourscore, are doing good work. The average of man's working years has been greatly prolonged, even in the present century. There are thousands of very old men, and tens of thousands of very old women, who are living peaceful and even useful lives, if we cannot call it altogether happy.

J. OLDDHAM. You will not claim happiness for them, you say?

O. SENIOR. My dear Dean, my dear Son, happiness is a blessed state very rarely vouchsafed to any who have passed a long life. The losses, ruined hopes and failed efforts in this world of ours are so frequent and so many that very few who live long years can have escaped them. How few are there among the elderly but have had happiness for them blighted by this world-war and all it brought about! To those who have suffered the worst of bereavements, the very thought of ever being happy again seems a mockery. Memory, peace, resignation alone are left. 'In quietness and in confidence shall be their strength.' Yet, after all, those whom in extreme age the mercy of Providence has blessed with health, modest competence and still active powers both of body and of mind—and these are not so very rare as to be

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counted quite *lusus naturæ*—to them, I say, even fourscore years and ten ought not to bring despair, intolerable pain, desire of immediate death. They have to make ready for the summons, to wait, to bear their lot in patience and faith.

J. OLDHAM. A lot, you assure us, not intolerable !

O. SENIOR. Not intolerable to those whose whole lives have been a wise preparation for it. The last years of man, like all that precede them, have their destined compensations. No period of human life can be counted one of perfect bliss. Three decades of joys, eager hopes, misused opportunities—three decades of stern labour, realized aims, inevitable failures—two or three decades yet to some of us of freedom, peace and sad memories. Such is human life, even to the most fortunate of us.

J. OLDHAM. The sad memories, I fear, include those of friends and comrades who have passed away, some of them even long ago.

O. SENIOR. My dear Dean, there you touch me to the quick. Apart from the loss of our dearest ones to which all human lives are more or less exposed, very old persons of necessity lose most of their friends, companions, fellow-workers, intellectual intimates. Those who remain are infirm and far away. Yes ! we cannot quite replace those we grasped most closely, whose spirits touched the tenderest fibres of our souls.

J. OLDHAM. You hold friendship to be impossible to the very old ?

O. SENIOR. New friendships, great friendships, perfect friendships, yes ! I fear. All friends of another generation, even the very best, are of a somewhat later world. They cannot share our outlook—theirs is so different. They face the world from another angle, even with other eyes. They look forward, whilst we look backward. They are not weighted with the mass of past experience we have. We cannot enter into the irrepressible hopes for the future which inspire them.

J. OLDHAM. The want of friends then is the chief burden of great age ? .



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O. SENIOR. One, at any rate, of its sore trials. But there is compensation even in this. The comrades with whom we lived and worked, hoped and rejoiced, are gone. They are cut off from our lives and our works; they inspire us no more with confidence and delight. But mark—how death is the mysterious revealer of life. It takes away those who are dear to us, but it gives them a halo of transfiguration. They have entered into a more unearthly atmosphere. We see their merits more clearly: we recall all that was best in them: any sense of rivalry, discussion, doubt about them, has disappeared: they are more than ever our friends, and they speak to us with a new voice. How often does it come to widower and to widow to feel that never in life did the husband know all that glorified his lost wife, to the wife to feel that she had never understood all that her lost husband had in him! Either can say with the poet 'my late espoused saint'. Something of this saintliness enshrines the memory of our lost friends. We see them no more; we hear them no longer; but they seem to us in remembrance greater and dearer than ever they seemed to us in life. And this memory of the departed friends forces us to feel constantly how close to 'the great majority' we are ourselves.

J. OLDHAM. You told us just now that you saw no reason even for the most aged to desire death. And I am sure you see no reason for them to fear death?

O. SENIOR. Why should we fear death? Every wise man has made ample preparation to meet it. He may fear disease, and lingering decay, and may long to be spared from such an end. With a grateful sense of the blessings I have received in a long life of moderate well-being I can still say with the philosopher Gorgias—*nihil habeo quod accusem senectutem*. My life is lived out. It is enough! I am the *conviva satur* of Horace. With reverence I can repeat those solemn words from the Cross: *Τετέλεσται*. *It is finished!* As for what remains to be done, as to what is to come hereafter, I hold by all I have preached in my office, and by all I have worked out in my own conscience for the faith that is in me. I

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trust that when I have preached to others, I myself shall not be found a castaway. The memory of a life of honest work is not really grievous, whatever be its failures and its sorrows. For my part, I have done, I think, in my small parish even more than I could have hoped to do, quite as much as I was ever capable of doing, little as it is, and poor as is any permanent result. If I had power to call out to the Angel of Death, I would not ask him either to delay his flight or to hasten it. May his stroke be sudden whenever it shall come! Do you remember that beautiful etching of Alfred Rethel—*Der Tod als Freund*? I have it framed and hung in my study. There the aged peasant—perhaps guard or bailiff of a monastery—has just returned from his day's work—his staff and his broad-brimmed pilgrim's hat are laid down by his side—his last supper is just finished—his book of psalms lies open on the table—he has sunk back to rest in his arm-chair, but his eyes are closed and it is his last sleep. The Saviour looks down on him from the crucifix hung over his head. Death, shrouded in the robes of a monk, steps forth and is tolling the passing bell. The open window shows a fair plain beyond with a river circling round the meadows; and a village spire stands clear, as the last orb of the setting sun sinks below the horizon. The whole atmosphere seems to be chanting—*Pax vobiscum*. The picture is a favourite study of mine. *Avete atque Valete Amici—mei haud immemores!*

## *Agra and the Taj*

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

**I**T would be difficult to find a railway station anywhere which lands its passengers upon a more remarkable scene than that at Agra. You emerge into the open space amid the usual brightly-clad crowd, and are arrested on the step of the carriage by the imposing spectacle presented upon either hand. To the right soar the minarets and domes of an immense mosque, the Jumma Masjid of the city, built by Shah Jahan, in A.D. 1644, in honour of the good Princess Jahanara, his daughter, who was buried at Delhi, after sharing the seven years' captivity of her father, deposed by Aurungzebe. This is a massive structure of sandstone, the great domes of which are diversified by a zigzag pattern in layers of white marble, producing a strange but picturesque effect; and to the left the vast red walls and bastions of Akbar's Fort climb upwards like sea-cliffs, facing the station with a huge battlemented gateway, and with long lines of crenelated parapet, under which runs in a broad stream, divided by many sandbanks, the sacred Yamuna, or Jumna, flowing grandly down to join the Ganges, and forming with that river the fertile Doab, the fairest portion of Hindustan proper.

Within these lofty walls are hidden, as the traveller will well know, the finest monuments of the Mogul time, as well as some of the favourite retreats of the sultans; and it is right that the first object to seize attention at Akbar's city should remind one of that truly great sovereign, whose tolerance and rare artistic taste created, what may be called, the new school of Hindustani architecture. Akbar loved India. The hearts of Babur and

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Humayun were always away in Central Asia, where one of them died ; but the son of Hamida, the Persian girl, born at Umarkot on the Indus, who began to rule as a boy of fourteen, and lived to prove so powerful a monarch, knew no country except his empire of Hindustan, and gave himself, heart and soul, to the idea of blending in India conquerors and conquered into one people. It is notable that the Hindus believed him to be one of their own people returned to earth, and all the more when one day he dug up at the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges the dish, the bottle, and the deer-skin of an anchorite ; articles which they supposed must have appertained to the Emperor in a previous existence. He chose Hindu princesses for his wives ; favoured and cultivated Hindu literature, albeit he himself could neither read nor write ; took Hindu statesmen into his deepest confidence, and by employing Hindu artists and masons, and giving them free play upon the old conventional Persian and Mogul models, he founded for India what comes nearest to a national style of building, wherein her old delicate skill of detailed ornament has mingled with the original strength of the invader's designs, so that, even now, many a graceful private mansion or forgotten temple in the by-streets of Indian cities proves how thoroughly Hindustani architecture is a living art. The breadth of Akbar's religious views, his generous interest in all forms of thought, his love of the many good qualities in his Indian subjects, and his dislike of the bigotry and fierceness of his own Mogul countrymen ; the grace, the joyfulness, the courage, and the kindness of the man, until those later years when the vices of his children disheartened him and his strong nature yielded, make Agra a veritable place of pilgrimage for those who remember Akbar's virtues and overlook his faults.

He even invented a reconciling religion. Mr. Keene says : ' The so-called " Divine Monotheism " of Akbar was an attempt to throw off the rules of Islam, and substitute an eclectic system obtained by putting together the systems of Zoroaster, of the Brahmans, and of

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Christianity, and retaining some Mohammedan forms. Few leading Moslems and only one Hindu (Birbal) embraced it; and it fell at the death of its founder, owing to the opposition of sincere believers and the indifference of the new Emperor Jahangir. But the Hindus continued to prosper till the time of Aurungzebe. Of Akbar's peers fifty-seven were Hindus out of about four hundred; under his grandson Shah Jahan, out of six hundred and nine, one hundred and ten were Hindus. Neither Akbar nor Jahangir converted their Hindu wives to the faith of Islam.' Faults the great Emperor certainly had. His city of Fatehpur-Sikri, built at enormous cost to his people, in a place where no man could live long because of the bad air and water, was a caprice so costly as to seem cruel; and beautiful as are the buildings in this city and at Delhi, due to his hand or to his influence, who has not heard of that fatal sweetmeat box which the Emperor carried, one side of which contained innocent pastilles of honey and almonds, and the other partition sweet-scented lozenges imbued with deadly poison? If Akbar gave you a bonbon from the kind side of his box, you were in high favour at court, and likely to command a province soon or to receive the charge of five thousand horse. If he smilingly offered you one from the other part, you could not refuse—for none dared to say 'No!' to Akbar and your mouth for a while became full of the fragrance of nard and myrrh, while you rode hurriedly home in your litter and there died before the golden palace robes could well be stripped off. They say that Akbar himself perished by making a mistake one evening when he wished for a sweetmeat. . . . Our first duty was, of course, to visit the Taj, and the next was to see the tomb where the dust of Akbar the Magnificent lies. The site of the Emperor's burial is called Sikandra, and is distant about five miles from the Fort Gate. It is approached by a super-archway of red sandstone, massive and majestic, crowned with great scrolls of Arabic, being the 'Chapter of the Kingdom' from the Koran. The white marble minarets on either side are broken, and broken is the patterned pavement by which you pass through a

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large but melancholy garden to the mausoleum of the Emperor. This is a vast mosque-like structure of red sandstone, diversified with marbles of many colours, having an imposing central entrance, and on each side of this main arch five smaller archways. Large flowers and bold arabesques run along the architraves, inlaid in brilliant hues. The entrance-chamber was originally vaulted with diapers, of blue and gold, the splendid effect of which may be judged by a small portion which has been recently renovated. By this grand approach you are led to the highest of four platforms, where, in the centre of a square upper pavilion, surrounded by lattice-work of wonderful pierced marble, the cenotaph of the Emperor stands. On one side of this monument are written in Arabic the words with which he used to be saluted, *Allahu Akbar*—‘God is Great’, and on the other those with which he was wont to reply to his obsequious courtiers, *Jalla jahlahu*—‘May His glory be glorified’. A yard or so from the monument rises a marble pillar, which was formerly coated with gold plates, and provided with a receptacle in which the Koh-i-Noor was kept. Around this central shrine, at the base of the edifice, are many little chapels, where similar but humbler memorials exist to other members of the Imperial line, among them a daughter of Aurungzebe. But to see where Akbar’s dust really reposes, you must come down from the proud and lofty pavilion, and the beautiful white corridors lighted of old with that great diamond, and by the Indian sunshine filtering upon it through those pierced panels; you must descend a gloomy subterranean slope paved with black flagstones, steep and rugged, and rapidly retreating from the glad warmth of the Indian morning outside into chilly shadows. This brings you to a dismal vaulted chamber, of conical form, a huge sepulchral cellar, which has no touch of defunct royalty about it, except some faint vestiges of gold and blue upon the roof, dimly illuminated by one square aperture. In the middle of the floor is thus perceived a white tomb-stone, the high polish of which catches what little light flickers about the place. This plain marble bears no inscription

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whatever ; only on the top of it is seen the Kalamdan carved upon a man's grave-slab by the Moguls. And under this simple stone lie the bones of Akbar the Magnificent, in a darkness which daylight was wont to penetrate only once a year in the old Imperial days. Now the place is always open to visitors ; but the Khadim in charge had reverently set a tumbler of flowers on the Mecca side of the grave, and spoke in a whisper, as if the mighty Akbar might still hear and resent any want of obeisance.

The Fort, already spoken of, contains within its vast red walls a whole town of splendid Mogul buildings. They are grouped together in a rich profusion of architecture not to be understood, unless it is remembered that the Mogul was a man of camps, and imitated in walled cities his own bygone habits of the desert. Thus, alike at Fatehpur-Sikri and this wonderful Agra Fort, edifice is crowded upon edifice within a narrow space, just as tents would have been in a Bactrian encampment. Moreover, the general design is virtually the same. The Dewan-i-Am, which you first see, with its three rows of thirty-six columns fronting the sunlight, where the place of the throne is still marked ; the Dewan-i-Khas, a marvel of elaborate work, carved and beautified beyond the power of any words to convey ; the Jahangir Mahal, and the beautiful mosques themselves, the Nagina and the Moti, all suggest tents and tent-poles, and the Kanauts or curtains of tents lifted high for light and air. These buildings are, in fact, all open halls, facing with tent-like fronts the square or the river on one side, and having secret apartments or recesses at the back, like the women's portion of a Turanian Kibitka. But, of course, from the most sumptuous green silk tent of Timur to the least of all these lovely edifices at Agra, Delhi, or Fatehpur-Sikri, is a longer step than from the lowest Mongol camp-follower to Akbar's intellect and capacity. The Dewan-i-Khas, with its embroidered arches and pilasters, and its inlaying of jewel-work, would alone suffice to render any city famous. Yet this is only one of the many treasures

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enshrined in the fortalice of Akbar. You pass from the columned grace and lightness of the Hall of Audience, upon a terrace overlooking the broad channel of the Jumna, with the snow-white domes of the Taj showing in the distance. Close to the balustrade of this terrace is placed a broad and solid slab of black stone, on which the throne of Akbar was set, while he administered justice to the crowds of his people assembled in the courtyard below. The stone is cracked right across, and there are rusty-red stains upon it, due, no doubt, to some ferreous oxide in the marble. The Khadim, however, tells you that the seat of the Emperor broke spontaneously and in indignation when the Jat usurper first sat there; and that the gouts of blood appeared on it because of his tyranny. Close at hand, approached by hidden passages, is the Muchchi Bhawan, a quadrangle of marble kiosks and pavilions, the central hollow of which was once filled with water and stocked with gold and silver fish; and there is a pretty open turret, with satin-white seats and pierced windows, from which the lovely ladies of the Court were wont to angle.

Yet again you wander, by a corridor of marble and some shining steps, by once-secret bowers of the zenana and bath-rooms, cool in the hottest noon, to a pair of brazen gates, spoil brought by Akbar from Chittore; and these admit the delighted visitor to a small, secluded mosque, dedicated to the use of those same lovely queens and odalisques of the Great Mogul for their daily devotions. Here is the Nagina, or 'Gem'—all of white marble, and delicately beautiful enough for the knees of the sweetest and stateliest of votaries. But it is a seed-pearl only to the Great Pearl adjoining, the famous Moti Masjid, the edifice which is a fair and perfect sister to Shah Jahan's other consummate work, the Taj Mahal. A heavy door of carved timber is thrust open by the Khadim, and you stand in a Muslim shrine, where only two colours are needed by the artist who would endeavour to depict it—the blue of the enroofing sky and the silvery white of the surrounding alabaster. All is sapphire and snow; a sanctuary



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without any ornament except its own supreme and spotless beauty of surface and material. The milky cupolas crown the holy place of prayer, approached by milk-white steps from the white enclosure, in the middle of which opens a marble tank, within the waters whereof the fifty-eight white pillars of the cloister glass their delicate twelve-sided shafts and capitals of subtle device. It is not quite exact to write that this Pearl of all Churches has no embellishment. Passages from the Koran are inscribed over some of the doorways and engrailed arches in flowing Arabic, wrought of black marble, deftly inlaid upon the tender purity of the alabaster. The delicate stone itself has here and there tints of rose colour, of pale amber, and of faint blue, and carved on many a panel and pilaster into soft fancies of spray and flower, scroll and arabesque. These slight variations from the prevailing pureness of the surface, however, no more mar the unsullied appearance of the mosque, than the meandering veins, the flush of the blood, and the shadows of the warm flesh impair the whiteness of a beautiful woman's body :

Cool, as to tread in summer-time on snows,  
It was to loiter there.

In 1857 this divine retreat was used by the European refugees as a hospital and one would think that the wildest delirium of the sick or the wounded must have been calmed into peace by an asylum so quiet, so tender, and so solemn.

In the south-east angle of this palace-crowded Fort they use also, as military cells, the Baoli, or Well-Room, and the other basement apartments whereto the Emperor and his ladies would retreat when the fierce heats of the Indian midsummer had wearied him of state, and them of prayer in the mosque, or of bargains with the silk-merchants' slaves in the Muchchi-Bhawun. 'Descending,' we are told, 'at early morning and followed by attendants with fruits and music, the royal party could wander about the labyrinths that honeycomb the fort in this direction, whose windows

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look on the river at the base of the palace. Arriving at the Baoli, they could seat themselves on cushions in the chambers that surrounded the water of the well, and idle away the sultry hours in the manner dwelt on by Persian poets.'

If, indeed, one would realize the pomp and luxury of this ancient Mogul Court, a very just idea may be gained from M. Bernier's account, who visited Agra during the reign of Shah Jahan. In a letter to M. de la Mothe le Vayer, dated July 1, 1663, contemporaneously translated, the Frenchman writes :

'The king appeared sitting upon his throne, in the bottom of the great hall of the Am-Kas splendidly appavelled. His vest was of white satin, flowered and raised with a very fine embroidery of gold and silk. His turban was of cloth of gold and having a fowl wrought upon it like a heron, whose foot was covered with diamonds of an extraordinary bigness and price, with a great Oriental topaz, which may be said to be matchless, shining like a little sun. A collar of big pearls hung about his neck down to his stomach, after the manner that some heathens wear here their great beads. His throne was supported by six high pillars, or feet, said to be of massive gold, and set with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. I am not able to teil you aright neither the number nor the price of this heap of precious stones, because it is not permitted to come near enough to count them, and to judge of their water and purity. Only this I can say, that the big diamonds are there in profusion, and that the throne is estimated to be worth four kouroures of roupies, if I remember well. I have said elsewhere that a roupie is almost equivalent to half-a-crown, a lecque to a hundred thousand roupies, and a kourour to a hundred lecques ; so that the throne is valued forty millions of roupies, which are worth about sixty millions of French livres. That which I find upon it best devised are two peacocks covered with precious stones and pearls. Beneath this throne there appeared all the Omrahs in splendid apparel upon a raised ground covered with a great canopy of pyrfled gold with great

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golden fringes, and enclosed by a silver balistre. The pillars of the hall were hung with tapestries of purfled gold, having the ground of gold; and for the roof of the hall there was nothing but great canopies of flowered satin fastened with red silken cords that had big tufts of silk mixed with threads of gold hanging on them. Below there was nothing to be seen but great silken tapestries, very rich, of an extraordinary length and breadth. In the court there was set abroad a curtain tent as long and large as the hall and more. It was joined to the hall by the upper part, and reached almost as far as to the middle of the court; meantime, it was all inclosed by a great balistre covered with plates of silver. It was supported by three pillars, being of the thickness and height of a bargemast, and by some lesser ones, and they all were covered with plates of silver. It was red from without and lined within with those fine chittes, or cloth painted by a pencil of Masulipatam, purposely wrought and contrived with such vivid colours, and flowers so naturally drawn of a hundred several fashions and shapes, that one would have said it were an hanging parterre. Thus was the great hall of the Am-Kas adorned and set out. As to those arched galleries which I have spoken of that are round about the courts, each Omrah had received order to dress them at his own charges; and, they now striving who should make his own most stately, there was seen nothing but purfled gold above and beneath, and rich tapestries under foot.'

Yet, all this while, nothing has been written of the Wonder of Agra, and the 'Crown of the World'—the Taj, the Peerless Tomb, built for the fair dead body of Arjamund Banoo Begum by her lord and lover, the Emperor Shah Jahan. In truth, it is difficult to speak of what has been so often described, the charm of which remains, nevertheless, quite indescribable. As a matter of course, our first hours in Agra were devoted to contemplation of that tender elegy in marble, which by its beauty has made immortal the loveliness that it commemorates. The Tartar princes and princesses from whom sprang the proud line of the Moguls were wont in

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their lifetime to choose a piece of picturesque ground, to enclose it with high walls, embellish its precincts with flower-beds and groves of shady trees, and to build upon it a Bara-duri, a 'twelve-gated' Pleasure House, where they took delight during the founder's life. When he died, the pavilion became a mausoleum, and never again echoed with song and music. Perhaps the fair daughter of Asuf-Khan, Shah Jahan's sultana, had loved this very garden in her life, for her remains were laid, at death, in its confines, while the Emperor commissioned the best artificers of his time to build a resting-place for her dust worthy of the graces of mind and body which are recorded in the Persian verse upon her grave.

In all the world no queen had ever such a monument. You have read a thousand times all about the Taj; you know exactly—so you believe—what to expect. There will be the gateway of red sandstone with the embroidered sentences upon it from the 'Holy Book,' the demi-vault inlaid with flowers and scrolls, then the green garden opening a long vista over marble pavements, between masses of heavy foliage and mournful pillars of the cypress, ranged like sentinels to guard the solemnity of the spot. At the far end of this vista, beyond the fountains and the marble platform, amid four stately white towers, you know what sweet and symmetrical dome will be beheld, higher than its breadth, solid and majestic, but yet soft and delicate in its swelling proportions and its milk-white sheen. Prepared to admire, you are also aware of the defects alleged against the Taj—the rigidity of its outlines, the lack of shadow upon its unbroken front and flanks, and the coloured inlaying said to make it less a triumph of architecture than of mosaic work, an illustration somewhat too striking and lavish of what is declared of the Moguls, that they 'designed like giants, and finished like jewellers'. You determine to judge it dispassionately, not carried away by the remembrance that twenty-thousand workmen were employed for twenty-two years in its construction, that it cost hard upon two million pounds sterling, and that gems and precious stones came in camel-loads from all parts of the

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earth to furnish the inlayers with their material. Then you pass beneath the stately portal—in itself sufficient to commemorate the proudest of princesses—and as the white cupola of the Taj rises before the gaze and reveals its beauty—grace by grace—as you pace along the paved avenue, the mind refuses to criticize what enchants the eye and fills the heart with a sentiment of reverence for the royal love which could thus translate itself into alabaster. If it be time of sunlight, the day is softened to perpetual afternoon by the shadows cast from the palms and peepuls, the thuja trees, and the pomegranates, while the hot wind is cooled by the scent of roses and jasmine. If it be moonlight, the dark avenue leads the gaze mysteriously to the soft and lofty splendour of that dome. In either case, when the first platform is reached, and the full glory of this snow-white wonder comes into sight, one can no more stay to criticize its details than to analyse a beautiful face suddenly seen. Admiration, delight, astonishment blend in the absorbed thought with a feeling that human affection never struggled more ardently, passionately, and triumphantly against the oblivion of Death. There is one sustained, harmonious, majestic sorrowfulness of pride in it, from the verse on the entrance which says that ‘the pure of heart shall enter the Gardens of God’, to the small, delicate letters of sculptured Arabic upon the tombstone which tell, with a refined humility, that Mumtaz-i-Mahal, the ‘Exalted of the Palace’, lies here, and that ‘Allah alone is powerful’.

The Garden helps the Tomb, as the Tomb dignifies the Garden. It is such an orderly wilderness of rich vegetation as could only be had in Asia, broad flags of banana belting the dark tangle of banyan and bamboo, with the white pavements gleaming crosswise through the verdure. Yet if the Taj rose amid the sands of a dreary desert, the lovely edifice would beautify the waste, and turn it into a tender parable of the desolation of death, and the power of love, which is stronger than death. You pace round\*the four sides of the milk-white monument, pausing to observe the glorious prospect over the

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Indian plains, commanded from the platform on that face where Jumna washes the foot of the wall. Its magnitude now astounds. The plinth of the Taj is over one hundred yards each way, and it lifts its golden pinnacle two hundred and forty-four feet in the sky. From a distance this lovely and aerial dome sits therefore above the horizon like a rounded cloud. And having paced about it, and saturated the mind with its extreme and irresistible loveliness, you enter reverently the burial-place of the Princess Arjamund, to find the inner walls of the monument as much a marvel of subtle shadow and chastened light, decked with delicate jewellery, as the exterior was noble and simple. On the pure surface of this Hall of Death, and upon the columns, panels, and trellis-work of the marble screens surrounding the tomb, are patiently inlaid all sorts of graceful and elaborate embellishments—flowers, leaves, berries, scrolls, and sentences—in jasper, coral, bloodstone, lapis-lazuli, nacre, onyx, turquoise, sardonyx, and even precious gems. Moreover, the exquisite Abode of Death is haunted by spirits as delicate as their dwelling. They will not answer to rude noises, but if a woman's voice be gently raised in notes of hymn or song, if a chord is quietly sounded, echoes in the marble vault take up the music, repeat, diversify and amplify it with strange combinations of melodious sounds, slowly dying away and re-arising, as if Israfil, 'who has the sweetest voice of all Allah's angels', had set a guard of his best celestial minstrels to watch the death-couch of Arjamund. For, under the beautiful screens and the carved trellis-work of alabaster is the real resting-place of the 'Exalted One of the Palace'. She has the centre of the circular area, marked by a little slab of snow-white marble; while by her side—a span loftier in height, because he was man and Emperor, but not displacing her from the pre-eminence of her grace and beauty—is the stone which marks the resting-spot of Shah Jahan, her lord and lover. He has immortalized—if he could not preserve alive for one brief day—his peerless wife; yet the pathetic moral of it all is written in a verse hereabouts.

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from the Hudees, or 'traditions'. It runs—after reciting the styles and titles of 'His Majesty, King of Kings, Shadow of Allah, whose Court is as Heaven'—'Saith Jesus (on whom be peace), This world is a bridge! pass thou over it, but build not upon it! This world is one hour; give its minutes to thy prayers; for the rest is unseen.'

## The Lantern Bearers

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

### I

THESE boys congregated every autumn about a certain easterly fisher-village, where they tasted in a high degree the glory of existence. The place was created seemingly on purpose for the diversion of young gentlemen. A street or two of houses, mostly red and many of them tiled; a number of fine trees clustered about the manse and the kirkyard, and turning the chief street into a shady alley; many little gardens more than usually bright with flowers; nets a-drying, and fisherwives scolding in the backward parts; a smell of fish, a genial smell of seaweed; whiffs of blowing sand at the street corners; shops with golf-balls and bottled lollipops; another shop with penny pickwicks (that remarkable cigar) and the *London Journal*, dear to me for its startling pictures, and a few novels, dear for their suggestive names: such, as well as memory serves me, were the ingredients of the town. These, you are to conceive posted on a spit between two sandy bays, and sparsely flanked with villas—enough for the boys to lodge in with their subsidiary parents, not enough (not yet enough) to cocknify the scene: a haven to the rocks in front: in front of that, a file of grey islets: to the left, endless links and sand wreaths, a wilderness of hiding-holes, alive with popping rabbits and soaring gulls: to the right, a range of seaward crags, one rugged brow beyond another; the ruins of a mighty and ancient fortress on the brink of one; coves between—now charmed into sunshine quiet, now whistling with wind and clamorous with bursting surges; the dens and sheltered hollows redolent of thyme and southernwood, the air at the cliff's edge brisk and clean and pungent of



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the sea—in front of all the Bass Rock, tilted seaward like a doubtful bather, the surf ringing it with white, the solan-geese hanging round its summit like a great and glittering smoke. This choice piece of seaboard was sacred, besides, to the wrecker ; and the Bass, in the eye of fancy, still flew the colours of King James ; and in the ear of fancy the arches of Tantallon still rang with horse-shoe iron, and echoed to the commands of Bell-the-Cat.

There was nothing to mar your days, if you were a boy summering in that part, but the embarrassment of pleasure. You might golf if you wanted ; but I seem to have been better employed. You might secrete yourself in the Lady's Walk, a certain sunless dingle of elders, all mossed over by the damp as green as grass, and dotted here and there by the streamside with roofless walls, the cold homes of anchorites. To fit themselves for life, and with a special eye to acquire the art of smoking, it was even common for the boys to harbour there ; and you might have seen a single penny pickwick, honestly shared in lengths with a blunt knife, bestrew the glen with these apprentices. Again, you might join our fishing parties, where we sat perched as thick as solan-geese, a covey of little anglers, boy and girl, angling over each other's heads, to the much entanglement of lines and loss of podleys and consequent shrill recrimination—shrill as the geese themselves. Indeed, had that been all, you might have done this often ; but though fishing be a fine pastime, the podley is scarce to be regarded as a dainty for the table ; and it was a point of honour that a boy should eat all that he had taken. Or again, you might climb the Law, where the whale's jawbone stood landmark in the buzzing wind, and behold the face of many counties, and the smoke and spires of many towns, and the sails of distant ships. You might bathe, now in the flaws of fine weather, that we pathetically call our summer, now in a gale of wind, with the sand scouring your bare hide, your clothes thrashing abroad from underneath their guardian stone, the froth of the great breakers casting you headlong ere it had drowned your knees. Or you

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might explore the tidal rocks, above all in the ebb of springs, when the very roots of the hills were for the nonce discovered; following my leader from one group to another, groping in slippery tangle for the wreck of ships, wading in pools after the abominable creatures of the sea, and ever with an eye cast backward on the march of the tide and the menaced line of your retreat. And then you might go Crusoeing, a word that covers all extempore eating in the open air: digging perhaps a house under the margin of the links, kindling a fire of the sea-ware, and cooking apples there—if they were truly apples, for I sometimes suppose the merchant must have played us off with some inferior and quite local fruit, capable of resolving, in the neighbourhood of fire, into mere sand and smoke and iodine; or perhaps pushing to Tantallon, you might lunch on sandwiches and visions in the grassy court, while the wind hummed in the crumbling turrets; or clambering along the coast, eat geans<sup>1</sup> (the worst, I must suppose, in Christendom) from an adventurous gean tree that had taken root under a cliff, where it was shaken with an ague of east wind, and silvered after gales with salt, and grew so foreign among its bleak surroundings that to eat of its produce was an adventure in itself.

There are mingled some dismal memories with so many that were joyous. Of the fisher-wife, for instance, who had cut her throat at Cauty Bay; and of how I ran with the other children to the top of the Quadrant, and beheld a posse of silent people escorting a cart, and on the cart, bound in a chair, her throat bandaged, and the bandage all bloody—horror!—the fisher-wife herself, who continued thenceforth to hag-ride my thoughts, and even to-day (as I recall the scene) darkens daylight. She was lodged in the little old jail in the chief street; but whether or no she died there, with a wise terror of the worst, I never inquired. She had been tipling; it was but a dingy tragedy; and it seems strange and hard that, after all these years, the poor crazy sinner should

<sup>1</sup> Wild cherries.

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be still pilloried on her cart in the scrap-book of my memory. Nor shall I readily forget a certain house in the Quadrant where a visitor died, and a dark old woman continued to dwell alone with the dead body; nor how this old woman conceived a hatred to myself and one of my cousins, and in the dread hour of the dusk, as we were clambering on the garden-walls, opened a window in that house of mortality and cursed us in a shrill voice and with a marrowy choice of language. It was a pair of very colourless urchins that fled down the lane from this remarkable experience! But I recall with a more doubtful sentiment, compounded out of fear and exultation, the coil of equinoctial tempests; trumpeting squalls, scouring flaws of rain; the boats with their reefed lugsails scudding for the harbour mouth, where danger lay, for it was hard to make when the wind had any east in it; the wives clustered with blowing shawls at the pier-head, where (if fate was against them) they might see boat and husband and sons—their whole wealth and their whole family—engulfed under their eyes; and (what I saw but once) a troop of neighbours forcing such an unfortunate homeward, and she squalling and battling in their midst, a figure scarcely human, a tragic Mænad.

These are things that I recall with interest; but what my memory dwells upon the most, I have been all this while withholding. It was a sport peculiar to the place, and indeed to a week or so of our two months' holiday there. Maybe it still flourishes in its native spot; for boys and their pastimes are swayed by periodic forces inscrutable to man; so that tops and marbles reappear in their due season, regular like the sun and moon; and the harmless art of knuckle-bones has seen the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the United States. It may still flourish in its native spot, but nowhere else, I am persuaded; for I tried myself to introduce it on Tweed-side, and was defeated lamentably; its charm being quite local, like a country wine that cannot be exported.

The idle manner of it was this:—

Toward the end of September, when schooltime was drawing near and the nights were already black, we

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would begin to sally from our respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull's-eye lantern. The thing was so well known that it had worn a rut in the commerce of Great Britain; and the grocers, about the due time, began to garnish their windows with our particular brand of luminary. We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigour of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noisomely of blistered tin; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers; their use was naught; the pleasure of them merely fanciful; and yet a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more. The fishermen used lanterns about their boats, and it was from them, I suppose, that we got the hint; but theirs were not bull's-eyes, nor did we ever play at being fishermen. The police carried them at their belts, and we had plainly copied them in that; yet we did not pretend to be policemen. Burglars, indeed, we may have had some haunting thoughts of; and we had certainly an eye to past ages when lanterns were more common, and to certain story-books in which we had found them to figure very largely. But take it for all in all, the pleasure of the thing was substantive; and to be a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat was good enough for us.

When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious 'Have you got your lantern?' and a gratified 'Yes!' That was the shibboleth, and very needful too; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognize a lantern-bearer, unless (like the polecat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-man lugger, with nothing but the thwarts above them—for the cabin was usually locked, or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull's-eyes discovered; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly

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bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk. Woe is me that I may not give some specimens—some of their foresights of life, or deep inquiries into the rudiments of man and nature, these were so fiery and so innocent, they were so richly silly, so romantically young. But the talk, at any rate, was but a condiment; and these gatherings themselves only accidents in the career of the lantern-bearer. The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night; the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned; not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public: a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.

### II

It is said that a poet has died young in the breast of the most stolid. It may be contended, rather, that this (somewhat minor) bard in almost every case survives, and is the spice of life to his possessor. Justice is not done to the versatility and the unplumbed childishness of man's imagination. His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud; there will be some golden chamber at the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted; and for as dark as his pathway seems to the observer, he will have some kind of a bull's-eye at his belt.

It would be hard to pick out a career more cheerless than that of Dancer, the miser, as he figures in the 'Old Bailey Reports', a prey to the most sordid persecutions, the butt of his neighbourhood, betrayed by his hired man, his house beleaguered by the impish schoolboy, and he himself grinding and fuming and impotently fleeing to the law against these pinpricks. You marvel at first that any one should willingly prolong a life so destitute of charm and dignity; and then you call to memory that had he chosen, had he ceased to be a miser, he could have been freed at once from these trials, and might have built himself a castle and gone escorted by a squadron. For the love of more recondite joys, which we cannot

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estimate, which, it may be, we should envy, the man had willingly forgone both comfort and consideration. 'His mind to him a kingdom was'; and sure enough, digging into that mind, which seems at first a dust-heap, we unearth some priceless jewels. For Dancer must have had the love of power and the disdain of using it, a noble character in itself; disdain of many pleasures, a chief part of which is commonly called wisdom; disdain of the inevitable end, that finest trait of mankind; scorn of men's opinions, another element of virtue; and at the back of all, a conscience just like yours and mine, whining like a cur, swindling like a thimble-rigger, but still pointing (there or thereabout) to some conventional standard. Here were a cabinet portrait to which Hawthorne perhaps had done justice; and yet not Hawthorne either, for he was mildly minded, and it lay not in him to create for us that throb of the miser's pulse, his fretful energy of gusto, his vast arms of ambition clutching in he knows not what: insatiable, insane, a god with a muck-rake. Thus, at least, looking in the bosom of the miser, consideration detects the poet in the full tide of life, with more, indeed, of the poetic fire than usually goes to epics; and tracing that mean man about his cold hearth, and to and fro in his uncomfortable house spies within him a blazing bonfire of delight. And so with others, who do not live by bread alone, but by some cherished and perhaps fantastic pleasure; who are meat salesmen to the external eye, and possibly to themselves are Shakespeares, Napoleons, or Beethovens; who have not one virtue to rub against another in the field of active life, and yet perhaps, in the life of contemplation, sit with the saints. We see them on the street, and we can count their buttons; but heaven knows in what they pride themselves! heaven knows where they have set their treasure!

There is one fable that touches very near the quick of life; the fable of the monk who passed into the woods, heard a bird break into song, hearkened for a trill or two, and found himself on his return a stranger at his convent gates; for he had been absent fifty years, and

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of all his comrades there survived but one to recognize him. It is not only in the woods that this enchanter carols, though perhaps he is native there. He sings in the most doleful places. The miser hears him and chuckles, and the days are moments. With no more apparatus than an ill-smelling lantern I have evoked him on the naked links. All life that is not merely mechanical is spun out of two strands: seeking for that bird and hearing him. And it is just this that makes life so hard to value, and the delight of each so incommunicable. And just a knowledge of this, and a remembrance of those fortunate hours in which the bird has sung to us, that fills us with such wonder when we turn the pages of the realist. There, to be sure, we find a picture of life in so far as it consists of mud and old iron, cheap desires and cheap fears, that which we are ashamed to remember, and that which we are careless whether we forget; but of the note of that time-devouring nightingale we hear no news.

The case of these writers of romance is most obscure. They have been boys and youths; they have lingered outside the window of the beloved, who was then most probably writing to someone else; they have sat before a sheet of paper, and felt themselves mere continents of congested poetry, not one line of which would flow: they have walked alone in the woods, they have walked in cities under the countless lamps; they have been to sea, they have hated, they have feared, they have longed to knife a man, and maybe done it; the wild taste of life has stung their palate. Or, if you deny them all the rest, one pleasure at least they have tasted to the full—their books are there to prove it—the keen pleasure of successful literary compositions. And yet they fill the globe with volumes, whose cleverness inspires me with despairing admiration, and whose consistent falsity to all I care to call existence, with despairing wrath. If I have no better hope than to continue to revolve among the dreary and petty businesses, and to be moved by the paltry hopes and fears with which they surround and animate their heroes, I declare I would die now. But

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there has never an hour of mine gone quite so dully yet; if it were spent waiting at a railway junction, I would have some scattering thoughts, I could count some grains of memory, compared to which the whole of one of these romances seems but dross.

These writers would retort (if I take them properly) that this was very true; that it was the same with themselves and other persons of (what they call) the artistic temperament; that in this we were exceptional, and should apparently be ashamed of ourselves; but that our works must deal exclusively with (what they call) the average man, who was a prodigious dull fellow, and quite dead to all but the paltriest considerations. I accept the issue. We can only know others by ourselves. The artistic temperament (a plague on the expression!) does not make us different from our fellow-men, or it would make us incapable of writing novels; and the average man (a murrain on the word!) is just like you and me, or he would not be average. It was Whitman who stamped a kind of Birmingham sacredness upon the latter phrase; but Whitman knew very well, and showed very nobly, that the average man was full of joys and full of a poetry of his own. And this harping on life's dullness and man's meanness is a loud profession of incompetence; it is one of two things: the cry of the blind eye, *I cannot see*, or the complaint of the dumb tongue, *I cannot utter*. To draw a life without delights to prove I have not realized it. To picture a man without some sort of poetry—well, it goes near to prove my case, for it shows an author may have little enough. To see Dancer only as a dirty, old, small-minded, impotently fuming man, in a dirty house, besieged by Harrow boys, and probably beset by small attorneys, is to show myself as keen an observer as . . . the Harrow boys. But these young gentlemen (with a more becoming modesty) were content to pluck Dancer by the coat-tails; they did not suppose they had surprised his secret or could put him living in a book: and it is there my error would have lain. Or say that in the same romance—I continue to call these books



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romances, in the hope of giving pain—say that in the same romance, which now begins really to take shape, I should leave to speak of Dancer, and follow instead the Harrow boys; and say that I came on some such business as that of my lantern-bearers on the links; and described the boys as very cold, spat upon by flurries of rain, and drearily surrounded, all of which they were; and their talk as silly and indecent, which it certainly was. I might upon these lines, and had I Zola's genius, turn out, in a page or so, a gem of literary art, render the lantern-light with the touches of a master, and lay on the indecency with the ungrudging hand of love; and when all was done, what a triumph would my picture be of shallowness and dullness! how it would have missed the point! how it would have belied the boys! To the ear of the stenographer, the talk is merely silly and indecent but ask the boys themselves, and they are discussing (as it is highly proper they should) the possibilities of existence. To the eye of the observer they are wet and cold, and drearily surrounded; but ask themselves, and they are in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern.

### III

For, to repeat, the ground of a man's joy is often hard to hit. It may hinge at times upon a mere accessory, like the lantern; it may reside, like Dancer's, in the mysterious inwards of psychology. It may consist with perpetual failure, and find exercise in the continued chase. It has so little bond with externals (such as the observer scribbles in his note-book) that it may even touch them not; and the man's true life, for which he consents to live, lie altogether in the field of fancy. The clergyman, in his spare hours, may be winning battles, the farmer sailing ships, the banker reaping triumph in the arts: all leading another life, plying another trade from that they chose; like the poet's housebuilder, who, after all, is cased in stone,

By his fireside, as impotent fancy prompts,  
Rebuilds it to his liking.

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In such a case the poetry runs underground. The observer (poor soul, with his documents!) is all abroad. For to look at the man is but to court deception. We shall see the trunk from which he draws his nourishment; but he himself is above and abroad in the green dome of foliage, hummed through by winds and nested in by nightingales. And the true realism were that of the poets, to climb up after him like a squirrel, and catch some glimpse of the heaven for which he lives. And the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets: to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing.

For to miss the joy is to miss all. In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action. That is the explanation, that the excuse. To one who has not the secret of the lanterns, the scene upon the links is meaningless. And hence the haunting and truly spectral unreality of realistic books. Hence, when we read the English realists, the incredulous wonder with which we observe the hero's constancy under the submerging tide of dullness, and how he bears up with his jibbing sweetheart, and endures the chatter of idiot girls, and stands by his whole unfeathered wilderness of an existence, instead of seeking relief in drink or foreign travel. Hence in the French, in that meat-market of middle-aged sensuality, the disgusted surprise with which we see the hero drift sidelong, and practically quite untempted, into every description of misconduct and dishonour. In each, we miss the personal poetry, the enchanted atmosphere, that rainbow work of fancy that clothes what is naked and seems to ennoble what is base; in each, life falls dead like dough, instead of soaring away like a balloon into the colours of the sunset; each is true, each inconceivable; for no man lives in the external truth, among salts and acids, but in the warm, phantasmagoric chamber of his brain, with the painted windows and the storied walls.

Of this falsity we have had a recent example from a man who knows far better—Tolstoi's *Powers of Darkness*. Here is a piece full of force and truth, yet quite untrue.

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For before Mikita was led into so dire a situation he was tempted, and temptations are beautiful at least in part ; and the work which dwells on the ugliness of crime and gives no hint of any loveliness in the temptation, sins against the modesty of life, and even when a Tolstoi writes it, sinks to melodrama. The peasants are not understood ; they saw their life in fairer colours ; even the deaf girl was clothed in poetry for Mikita, or he had never fallen. And so, once again, even an Old Bailey melodrama, without some brightness of poetry and lustre of existence, falls into the inconceivable and ranks with fairy tales.

### IV

In nobler books we are moved with something like the emotions of life ; and this emotion is very variously provoked. We are so moved when Levine labours in the field, when André sinks beyond emotion, when Richard Fernal and Lucy Desborough meet beside the river, when Antony, ' not cowardly, puts off his helmet,' when Kent has infinite pity on the dying Lear, when, in Dostoieffsky's *Despised and Rejected*, the uncomplaining hero drains his cup of suffering and virtue. These are notes that please the great heart of man. Not only love, and the fields, and the bright face of danger, but sacrifice and death and unmerited suffering humbly supported, touch in us the vein of the poetic. We love to think of them, we long to try them, we are humbly hopeful that we may prove heroes also.

We have heard, perhaps, too much of lesser matters. Here is the door, here is the open air. *Itur in antiquam silvam.*

## *The House of Commons*

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

**T**HERE is a story told of an ancient dandy in London who, taking, one sunny afternoon, his accustomed stroll down Bond Street, met an acquaintance hurrying in the direction of Westminster. 'Whither away so fast this hot day?' murmured the dandy. 'To the House of Commons,' cried his strenuous friend, brushing past him. 'What!' said the dandy, with a yawn, 'does that go on still?' Yes; the House of Commons still goes on, still attracts an enormous, some think an inordinate, amount of public attention. What are called 'politics' occupy in Great Britain a curiously prominent place. Literature, art, science, are avenues to a fame more enduring, more agreeable, more personally attractive than that which awaits at the end of his career the once prominent party politician. Yet with us a party leader looms more largely in the public mind, excites more curiosity, than almost any other description of mortal. He often appears where he would not seem to have any particular business. If a bust is to be unveiled of a man of letters, if a public eulogium is to be pronounced on a man of science, if the health is to be proposed of a painter or an actor, or if some distinguished foreigner is to be feasted, the astute managers of the function, anxious to draw a crowd, and to make the thing a success, try, in the first instance, at all events, to secure the presence of Mr. Balfour, or Lord Rosebery, or Lord Salisbury, or Mr. Chamberlain, rather than of Lord Kelvin or Mr. Leslie Stephen. The fact is that politicians, and particularly the heroes of the House of Commons, the gladiators of politics, share in the country some of the popularity which naturally belongs to famous jockeys, which once belonged to the heroes of the prize ring. It is more

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difficult to explain this than to understand it. Our party strife, our Parliamentary contests, have long presented many of the features of a sport. When Mr. Gladstone declared in the House of Commons, with an irresistible twinkle of the eye, that he was an 'old Parliamentary hand', the House was convulsed with laughter, and the next morning the whole country chuckled with delight. We all liked to think that our leading statesman was not only full of enthusiasm and zeal, but also a wily old fellow, who knew a thing or two better than his neighbours. I have always thought the instantaneous popularity of this remark of Mr. Gladstone's illustrates very well the curiously mixed feelings we entertain towards those great Parliamentary chieftains who have made their reputations on the floor of the House of Commons. There is nothing noble or exalted in the history of the House of Commons. Indeed, a devil's advocate, had he the requisite talent, could easily deliver an oration as long and as eloquent as any of Burke's or Sheridan's, taking as his subject the stupidity, cowardice, and, until quite recent times, the corruption of the House of Commons. I confess I cannot call to mind a single occasion in its long and remarkable history when the House of Commons, as a whole, played a part either obviously heroic or conspicuously wise; but we all of us can recall hundreds of occasions when, heroism and wisdom being greatly needed, the House of Commons exhibited either selfish indifference, crass ignorance, or the vilest passion. Nor can it honestly be said that our Parliamentary heroes have been the noblest of our race. Among great ministers, Sir Robert Walpole had good sense; Lord North, a kind heart; the elder Pitt, a high spirit; his son, a lofty nature; Peel, a sense of duty; Lord John Russell, a dauntless courage; Disraeli, patience to wait; but for no one of these distinguished men is it possible to have any very warm personal regard. If you turn to men who have never been powerful Ministers, the language of eulogy is perhaps a little easier. Edmund Burke, alone of Parliamentary orators, lives on in his speeches, full as they are of

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wisdom and humanity ; through the too fierce argumentations of Charles James Fox, that great man with a marred career, there always glowed a furious something which warms my heart to its innermost depth. John Bright is a great Parliamentary figure, though many of his speeches lack a 'gracious somewhat'. Richard Cobden's oratory possessed one unique quality : it almost persuaded his political opponents that he was right and they were wrong. Among the many brilliant lawyers who have, like birds of passage, flitted through the House of Commons usually on their way to what they thought to be better things, I know but one of whom I could honestly say, 'May my soul be with his !' I refer to Sir Samuel Romilly, the very perfection, in my eyes, of a lawyer, a gentleman, and a member of Parliament, whose pure figure stands out in the frieze of our Parliamentary history like the figure of Apollo amongst a herd of satyrs and goats. And he, in a fit of depression, made an end of himself.

No, the charm—the undeniable charm ; the strength—the unquestioned strength ; the utility—of the House of Commons do not depend upon the nobility of the characters of either its leaders or its rank and file ; nor on its insight into affairs—its capacity to read the signs of the times, its moral force, still less its spiritual depth ; but because it has always somehow or other, both before Reform Bills and after Reform Bills, represented truthfully and forcefully, not the best sense of the wisest people, not the loftiest aspirations of the noblest people, but the primary instincts, the rooted habits of a mixed race of men and women destined in the strange providence of God to play a great part in the history of the world. A zealous philanthropy may well turn pale at the history of the House of Commons which, all through the eighteenth century, tolerated with fearful composure the infamies of the slave trade, the horrors of our gaols, the barbarity of our criminal code, the savagery of the press-gang, the heathenism of the multitude, the condition of things in our mines. The eager reformer must blush as he reads of our Parliamentary

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representation—of rotten boroughs, of deserted villages with two members, and of Manchester with none. The financial purist must shudder as he studies the Civil List, and ponders over the pensions and sinecures which spread corruption broadcast through the land. It is true enough, and yet the fact remains, that all this time the British nation was stumbling and groaning along the path which has floated the Union Jack in every quarter of the globe. I do not know that it can be said the House of Commons did much to assist the action of this drama; but, at all events, it did not succeed in frustrating it.

However, my object to-night is to say something about the House of Commons as it exists at present, and as it strikes the humble individual who has sat in it for seven years as your representative. Well, first of all, I am a Scottish member, and as a Scottish member one's attitude to the House of Commons is not a little that of an outsider. Scotland has nothing to do with the early history of the English Parliament. Until 1707 you had a Parliament of your own, with Lords and Commons sitting all together cheek by jowl. A great economy of time, for, as Andrew Fairservice in *Rob Roy* puts it, there was no need then for Lords and Commons to have their havers twice over. There is no need to be ashamed of the old Scots Parliament. It passed laws of unrivalled brevity and perfect intelligibility, a now lost art. Scotland owes more to its old Parliament than it yet does to the United Parliament. If you seek a record of its labours, you will find one in an essay penned sixty years ago by a Scotch Tory, the very man who wrote a history of Europe in twenty volumes, to prove that Heaven was always on the side of the Tories.<sup>1</sup>

The old Scots Parliament met for the last time on 25 March 1707. Unions are never popular. The Union of England and Scotland was undoubtedly most unpopular. One member for Fifeshire voted for it, and two against it. I wonder which way I should have voted.

<sup>1</sup> Alison's *Essays*, vol. I.

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Cupar, Burntisland, Kinghorn, Dunfermline, Inverkeithing, and Queensferry voted Aye ; but St. Andrews, Dysart, Kirkcaldy, Pittenweem, voted No. The first article of the Treaty for Union, which involved the rest, was carried by 116 votes against 83 ; and then, as Lord Seafield said, ' There was the end of an auld sang ' ; but some day—who knows ?—the auld sang may be set to a new tune. But this much is certain—the new tune will in no way affect the loyalty of Scotsmen to the Union of the two countries. But for that Union Scotland would not stand where she does in the eyes of the world. What Scotland wanted, what Scotland standing alone could never have had, was a theatre wide enough for the energy of her sons. A country so small, so barren, could never have supplied such a theatre. Scotsmen must have taken service abroad, and spent their lives fighting other men's battles, or building up other men's fortunes. United with South Britain she has been able to play a glorious part both at home and abroad, and this she has done without losing either her Scottish character or her Scottish accent. Still, the fact remains that the seventy-two members from Scotland preserve a character of their own among the 590 representatives from England, Wales, and Ireland. This must be so. Scotch law is very different from English law. We have in Scotland our own laws and our own judicature. A Scotsman cannot be sued in an English court unless he is snapped with a writ whilst sojourning in that strange land. Scotland has her own religion ; for, though I am far from saying that traces of a common Christianity may not be found lurking both in Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, still, speaking as a Parliament man, the religions of the two countries may be considered as distinct. In England, those who do not believe in the Divine authority of Episcopacy, who deny either the validity of the orders of the Episcopalian clergy or that there are such things as holy orders at all, who repudiate the sacramentarian system, and hate the pretensions of a priesthood, are engaged in a daily, bitter strife with the Church party, with which Scotland has as yet no concern.



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The educational system is different. Here you have universal School Boards, and pay an allegiance—sometimes real, sometimes formal—to a Catechism which, though often supposed to be the most Scotch thing in existence, was, as a matter of fact, compiled in England by Englishmen. In England School Boards are far from universal, and clerically conducted schools provide the education of half the school-going population. The Scottish system of local government is different in important respects from the English. For example, your Parish Councils administer the Poor Law; in England they do not. Your rating system is different. Here the rate is divided between the owner and the occupier; in England the occupier pays the whole rate. All these differences invite different treatment—there have to be English Bills and Scotch Bills; and though some Scotch members may honestly try to understand English Bills, I never knew an English member, unless he was by birth a Scotsman, who ever took, or pretended to take, the least trouble to understand a Scotch Bill. They vote if they happen to be in the House whilst Scotch business is being discussed, but they vote as they are told by their party managers. It follows, as I say, from this that a Scotch member surveys the House of Commons somewhat as an outsider.

The great characteristic of the House of Commons is that it is a deliberative and consultative chamber meeting together for the purposes of framing laws (if it considers any new laws necessary) which are to bind the whole nation, and of criticizing the Executive. It does not meet for the purpose of oratory, or to strengthen party organization, but to frame laws of universal obligation and to find fault with or support Ministers. This at once gets rid of the platform orator, and establishes the difference between public meetings and the House of Commons. It is no discredit to the public meeting or to the House of Commons to say that what will find favour with the one excites the disgust of the other, for the two have little in common. The object of a speaker at a public meeting is to excite enthusiasm and to spread his faith; but in the

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House of Commons his object is to remove objections, to state propositions in a way least likely to make reply easy, to show that a scheme is practicable and free from particular injustices, to handle figures with dexterity, and to avoid empty phraseology. There is nothing the House of Commons hates more than to be reminded of the purgatorial flames through which each member has had to pass in order to take his seat by the side of the Speaker; and therefore it is that the utterance in all innocence, by some new member of either party, of the cries and watchwords with which he was accustomed to enliven his electioneering speeches never fails to excite the angry groans of his opponents and the sarcastic smiles of his friends. Nor is there anything dishonest in this. There is a time for all things, and the House of Commons is before everything a deliberative and consultative assembly. Another marked characteristic of the House of Commons is its total indifference to outside reputations or great fortunes. Local magnates, manufacturers whose chimneys blacken a whole countryside, merchants whose ships plough the broad and narrow seas, speculators in cotton and in sugar, mayors and provosts whose portraits adorn town halls, whose names are household words in their own districts, lawyers so eminent that they will not open their mouths in the courts for less than a hundred guineas, need not hope to be received by the House of Commons otherwise than with languid indifference. If they prove to be bores, so much the worse; if they prove not to be bores, so much the better. If they push themselves to the front, it will be by Parliamentary methods; if they remain insignificant, it is only what was to be expected. Never was an assembly so free from all taint of mercenariness as the House of Commons. It does not care a snap of its finger whether the income of a new member is £100,000 a year or £3 a week—whether his father was a duke or a blacksmith; its only concern with him is that, if he has anything to say, he may say it, and that, if he has nothing to say, he will say nothing.

The House of Commons is often said to be a place of

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great good-fellowship. Within certain necessarily restricted limits it is. It is difficult to maintain aloofness. You may find yourself serving on a Committee alongside some one whose public utterances or party intrigues you have always regarded with aversion; but it may easily be that you agree with him, not, it may be, as to the Government of Ireland or the sacred principles of Free Trade, but as to the prudence or folly of a particular line of railway, or the necessity of a new water-supply for some large town. You hob-a-nob at luncheon, you grumble together over your dinner, you lament the spread of football clubs and brass bands in your respective constituencies; you criticize your leaders, and are soon quite at home in the society of the very man you thought you detested. There is nothing like a common topic to break the ice, and two members of Parliament have always something to talk about. But farther than this it is hard to go. The House is too large. Amongst an assembly of 670 men well on in life the hand of Death is always busy. Vacancies occur with startling regularity. The only uncertainty is, who is to drop out of the ranks. 'Death of a Member of Parliament' is a common announcement on the placards of the evening papers; and then the thriftiest of Scotch members fumbles for his bawbee, buys the paper, stops under the next lamp-post to see who it is who has gone, whose figure will no more be seen in the Tea-room and the Lobby. Whoever it is, big man or little, a silent member or a talkative one, a wise man or a fool, his place will soon be filled up, and his party Whip will be heard moving for a new writ to issue for the Borough of Small-Talk in the place of Jeremiah Jones, deceased. 'Poor Jones!' we all say; 'not a bad fellow, Jones; I suppose Brown will get the seat this time.'

I know no place where the great truth that no man is necessary is brought home to the mind so remorselessly, and yet so refreshingly, as the House of Commons. Over even the greatest reputations it closes with barely a bubble. And yet the vanity of politicians is enormous. Lord Melbourne, you will remember, when asked his

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opinion of men, replied, with his accustomed expletive, which I omit as unfit for the polite ear of Cowdenbeath, 'Good fellows, very good fellows, but vain, very vain,'

There is a great deal of vanity, both expressed and concealed, in the House of Commons. I often wonder why, for I cannot imagine a place where men so habitually disregard each other's feelings, so openly trample on each other's egotisms. You rise to address the House. The Speaker calls on you by name. You begin your speech. Hardly are you through with the first sentence when your oldest friend, your college chum, the man you have appointed guardian of your infant children, rises in his place, gives you a stony stare, and, seizing his hat in his hand, ostentatiously walks out of the House, as much as to say, 'I can stand many things, but not this.'

Whilst speaking in the House I have never failed to notice one man, at all events, who was paying me the compliment of the closest attention, who never took his eyes off me, who hung upon my words, on whom everything I was saying seemed to be making the greatest impression. In my early days I used to address myself to this man, and try my best to make my discourse worthy of his attention; but sad experience has taught me that this solitary auditor is not in the least interested either in me or in my speech, and that the only reason why he listens so intently and eyes me so closely is because he has made up his mind to follow me, and is eager to leap to his feet, in the hope of catching the Speaker's eye, the very moment I sit down. Yet, for all this, vanity thrives in the House—though what it feeds on I cannot say. We are all anxious to exaggerate our own importance, and desperately anxious to make reputations for ourselves and to have our names associated with some subject—to pose as its patron and friend. On great Parliamentary nights these vanities, from which even our leaders are not wholly exempt, are very conspicuous. On such occasions, the House of Commons has reminded me of a great drying-ground, where all the clothes of a neighbourhood may be seen

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fluttering in a gale of wind. There are night-gowns and shirts and petticoats so distended and distorted by the breeze as to seem the garments of a race of giants, rather than of poor mortal man; even the stockings of some slim maiden, when puffed out by the lawless wind, assume dropsical proportions. But the wind sinks, having done its task, and then the matter-of-fact washer-woman unpegs the garments, sprinkles them with water, and ruthlessly passes over them her flat-irons, and lo and behold! these giant's robes are reduced to their familiar, domestic, and insignificant proportions.

A marked characteristic of the House of Commons is its generosity. We have heard far too much lately of contending jealousies. The only thing the House is really jealous of is its own reputation. If a member, no matter who he is, or where he sits, or what he says, makes a good speech and creates a powerful impression, nobody is more delighted, more expansively and effusively delighted, than Sir William Harcourt. On such occasions he glows with generosity. And this is equally true of Mr. Balfour, and indeed of the whole House, which invariably welcomes talent and rejoices over growing reputations.

Members of Parliament may be divided into two classes: Front Bench men and Back Bench men. The former are those who fill or have filled posts in an Administration, and they sit either on the Government Bench or on the Front Opposition Bench. These personages enjoy certain privileges, and the most obvious of these privileges is that they speak with a table in front of them, whereby they are enabled cunningly to conceal their notes. Now, the private or Back Bench member has no place in which to conceal his notes, save his hat, a structure ill-fitted for the purpose. Another of the privileges of a Front Bench man is that he has, or is supposed to have, a right of intervention in debate just when he chooses. This is an enormous advantage. Just consider the unhappy fate of a private member who is anxious to speak during an important debate. He prepares his speech, and comes down to

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the House with it concealed about his person. He bides his time; an excellent opportunity occurs; nobody has as yet said what he is going to say; he rises in his place; but alas! fifteen other members with fifteen other speeches in their pockets rise, too, and the Speaker calls on one of them, and down falls our unhappy member, to wait another opportunity. This may happen frequently, and often does happen fifteen or sixteen times. He has to sit still and hear other men mangle his arguments, quote his quotation. Night follows night, and the speech remains undelivered, festering in his brain, polluting his mind. At last he gets his chance—the Speaker calls out his name; but by this time he has got sick of the subject—it has grown weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable. He has lost his interest, and soon loses the thread of his discourse; he flounders and flops, has recourse to his hat, repeats himself, grows hot and uncomfortable, forgets his best points, and finally sits down dejected, discouraged, disappointed. And all the time his wife is in the Ladies' Gallery gnashing her teeth at the poor figure he is cutting! No wonder he hates the Front Bench man. But there are gradations in the Front Bench. Between the leaders of the House, who bag all the best moments, and the humble Under Secretary or Civil Lord, there is a great gulf fixed. These latter gentry are not allowed to speak at all, except on matters relating to their departments, or when they are told off to speak by the leader. Nothing is more amusing than to notice the entire eclipse of some notorious chatterbox who has been given some minor post in an Administration. Before he took office he was chirping on every bough; hardly a night passed but his sweet voice was to be heard. After he has taken office he frequently has to hold his tongue for a whole session. Poor fellow! he will sometimes buttonhole you in the Lobby, and almost tearfully complain of the irksomeness of office, and tell you how he longs for the hour of emancipation, when once more his voice, like that of the turtle, shall be heard in the land. If you gently remind him of the salary he draws, and hint that

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it may be some consolation even for silence, ten to one he walks away in a huff, and attributes your innocent remarks to jealousy. Between the Front Bench and the Back Bench there has always been a feud. Front Bench men of the first rank are too apt, so it is said, to regard the House of Commons as a show run for their benefit, to look upon themselves as a race of actor-managers who arrange the playbill, and divide all the best parts among themselves. The traditions of Parliament foster this idea. But the Back Bench men are not always in the mood to submit to be for ever either the audience or the supernumeraries, and whenever they get the chance of asserting themselves against their leaders, they take it. But in public they seldom get the chance, so they have to content themselves with being as disagreeable in private as they possibly can. What I think is a just complaint, frequently made by Back Benchers, relates to the habit Parliamentary leaders of late have greatly indulged in, of occupying an enormous amount of time abusing one another for past inconsistencies of conduct. These amenities, sometimes called *tu quoques*, or 'You are another', are infinitely wearisome, and proceed upon the mistaken assumption that the House of Commons greatly concerns itself with the political reputation of its leaders. It does nothing of the sort. What it wants is leaders who can make business go, who will show sport, and lead their hounds across a good line of country.

As a Back Benchman, the only real complaint I have to make is of the woeful waste of time. One goes down to the House every day—Saturdays and Wednesdays excepted—at 4 o'clock, and you are supposed to remain there till midnight. On Wednesdays the House meets at 12 and adjourns at 5.30. What do we do all this time? To be interested in everything that is going on is flatly impossible. A quantity of the business is of a local character, dealing with places and schemes of which we know and can know nothing. Then there are terribly protracted debates on the second readings of Bills, occasionally interesting, but necessarily full of repetitions. I do not well see how this is to be prevented;

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but it is a shocking infliction. The Committee stage of a Bill you have really mastered is interesting and instructive, but even this stage is too protracted; and then comes a later stage—the report stage—when a great deal is said all over again; and even this is frequently followed by a debate on the third reading. Of course, you are not in the House all the time. There is the Library, the Tea-room, and the Smoking-room, where you may play chess and draughts, but no other game whatsoever. But nobody does anything vehemently. An air of languor pervades the whole place. Listlessness abounds. Members stroll from one room to another turn over the newspapers, and yawn in each other's faces. In the summer months, the Terrace by the riverside has been recently converted into a kind of watering-place. From five o'clock to seven it is crowded with fine ladies and country cousins, drinking tea and devouring strawberries. Occasionally some Parliamentary person of importance will choose to stalk by, and even—such is the affability of true greatness—have a cup of tea with a party of friends. A poorer way of killing time has not, I think, yet been discovered; but it is a convincing proof of the *ennui* of Parliamentary life.

The great problem of Ministers is the reform of the rules of the House of Commons—how to make the House at once a deliberative and yet a business-like assembly.

And yet men do not willingly strike off the chains of this slavery. A private member of Parliament nowadays gets nothing, neither pudding nor praise, in exchange for his time and his money. Patronage he has absolutely none—not a single place, even in the Post-Office, to give away. Nor has he a single privilege that I am aware of. His routine duties on committees are onerous, nor are his opportunities of making speeches, if he wishes to do so, otherwise than few and far between. His leaders treat him with frigid civility, and nobody cares for a letter from him unless it encloses a postal order for at least ten shillings. And yet the labour of winning a seat and of retaining a seat is very great; nor is the expense insignificant.



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When one thinks of all the different ways of spending £700, a Parliamentary election does not obviously strike you as being one of the most delightful. It may be said you have the opportunity of legislating on your own account. You may bring in a Bill of your own, and have the satisfaction of hearing it read a third time. Hardly is this true. In former days some of the most useful laws in the Statute Book were pioneered through the House by private members. But now, so greedy have Governments become, that they take nearly all the time available for legislative purposes, and, unless the private member gets the first place in the ballot, he has not a chance of carrying any measure through if it excites the least opposition. But when all is said and done, the House of Commons is a fascinating place. It has one great passion, one genuine feeling, and that is, to represent and give practical expression to the mind of the whole nation. It has no prejudices in this matter, for it has no existence independent of its creators. It has nothing to do with the choice of its component parts. The constituencies may send up whom they choose, but these persons, when they do come up, must not expect to be hailed as 'Saviours of Society'. No; they must be content to be parts of a whole, to give and take, to hear their pet creeds, faiths, and fancies, rudely questioned, tested, and weighed. A great nation will never consent to be dominated either by a sect or by an interest. And yet, if the House of Commons has a leaning to any particular class of member—which by rights it ought to have—it is for an increased direct representation of the wage-earning community. I hope such representatives may be forthcoming in greater numbers as time goes on. But if they are to do any good in the House of Commons, they must go there, not as conquering heroes to whom the unknown future belongs, but as Britons anxious to contribute out of their special knowledge, from their hived experience, to the collective wisdom of the nation; they must be willing to learn as well as to teach, to increase the stock of their information, to acknowledge mistakes, to widen their views; and, above all, must they

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recognize that the mighty river of our national existence, if it is to continue to flow as triumphantly as before, must continue to be fed by many tributary streams.

There are, I know, those who affect to believe that representative assemblies do not stand where they did, and that the day of their doom is not far distant. I see no reason to believe anything of the kind, for, scan the horizon as you may, you cannot discover what there is to take their place. We have no mind for military despotisms, even if we had a military hero. Nor are we disposed to believe in the superior wisdom of the so-called statesmanship which is manufactured in Government offices. Better by far the occasional mistakes of a free people and a popular assembly than the deadly and persistent errors of diplomatists and hereditary statesmen. The House of Commons will, I cannot doubt, be still going on when the twentieth century breathes its last. Change it will know, and reform; but, founded as it is upon a rational and manly system of representation, why should it not always continue to reflect, cautiously but truthfully, the mind and will of the British people?

## *John Galsworthy*

### A PORTRAIT

**I**T is at the age of eighty that I picture him without the vestige of a stoop, rather above middle height, of very well-proportioned figure, whose flatness of back and easy movements were the admiration of all who saw them. His iron-grey eyes had lost none of their colour, they were set-in deep, so that their upper lids were invisible, and had a peculiar questioning directness, apt to change suddenly into twinkles. His head was of fine shape—one did not suspect that it required a specially made hat, being a size larger than almost any other head ; it was framed in very silky silvery hair, brushed in an arch across his forehead, and falling in becoming curves over the tips of his ears ; and he wore always a full white beard and moustaches, which concealed a jaw and chin of great determination cleft by a dimple. His nose had been broken in his early boyhood ; it was the nose of a thinker, broad and of noticeable shape. The colour of his cheeks was a fine dry brown ; his brow very capacious, both wide and high, and endowed with a singular serenity. But it was the balance and poise of his head which commanded so much attention. In a theatre, church, concert-hall, there was never any head so fine as his, for the silvery hair and beard lent to its massiveness a curious grace and delicacy.

The owner of that head could not but be endowed with force, sagacity, humour, and the sense of justice. It expressed, indeed, his essential quality—equanimity ; for there were two men in him—he of the chin and jaw, a man of action and tenacity, and he of the nose and brow, the man of speculation and impersonality ; yet these two were so curiously balanced and blended that there was no harsh ungraceful conflict. And what made

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this equanimity so memorable was the fact that both his power of action and his power of speculation were of high quality. He was not a commonplace person content with a little of both. He wanted and had wanted throughout life, if one may judge by records, a good deal of both, ever demanding with one half of him strong and continuous action, and with the other half, high and clean thought and behaviour. The desire for the best both in material and spiritual things remained with him through life. He felt things deeply ; and but for his strange balance, and a yearning for inward peace which never seems to have deserted him, his ship might well have gone down in tragedy.

To those who had watched that journey, his voyage through life seemed favourable, always on the top of the weather. He had worked hard, and he had played hard, but never too hard. And though one might often see him irritated, I think no one ever saw him bored. He perceived a joke quicker than most of us ; he was never eccentric, yet fundamentally independent of other people's opinions and perhaps a little unconscious that there were better men than he. Not that he was conceited, for of this quality, so closely allied to stupidity and humbug, he had about as much as the babe unborn. He was, indeed, a natural foe to anæmia in any of its forms, just as he was instinctively hostile to gross bull-beef men and women. The words, ' a bullying chap ', were used by him as crushing dispraise. I can recall him now in his chair after dinner, listening to one who, puffing his cigarette, is letting himself go on a stream of robustious, rather swaggering complacencies ; with what a comprehending straight look he regards the speaker, not scornful, not sarcastic, but simply, as it were, saying : ' No, my young buck, for all your fine full-blooded talk, and all your red face, you are what I see you to be, and you will do what I tell you to do ! ' Such men had no chance with him when it came to the tug of war ; he laid his will on them as if they had been children.

He was that rather rare thing, a pure-blooded Englishman ; having no strain of Scotch, Welsh, Irish, or

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foreign blood in his pedigree for four hundred years at least. He sprang from a long line of farmers intermarrying with their kind in the most southern corner of Devonshire, and it is probable that Norse and British blood were combined in him in a high state of equality. Even in the actual situation of his place of origin, the principle of balance had been maintained, for the old farmhouse from which his grandfather had emerged had been perched close to the cliff. Thus, to the making of him had gone land and sea, the Norseman and the Celt.

Articled to the Law at the age of sixteen by his father, a Plymouth merchant, whose small ancient ships traded to the Mediterranean in fruits, leather, and wines, he had come to London, and at the earliest possible date (as was the habit with men in those times) had been entered on the rolls as a solicitor. Often has he told me of the dinner he gave in honour of that event. 'I was a thread-paper, then,' he would say (indeed, he never became fat)—'We began with a barrel of oysters.' About that and other festivities of his youth, there was all the rich and rollicking flavour of the days of *Pickwick*. He was practically dependent on his own exertions from the time he began to practise his profession, and it was characteristic of him that he never seems to have been hard pressed for money. The inherent sanity and moderation of his instincts preserved him, one imagines, from the financial ups and downs of most young men, for there was no niggardliness in him, and a certain breadth of conception characterized his money affairs throughout life. It was rather by the laws of gravity, therefore, whereby money judiciously employed attracts money, and the fact that he lived in that money-maker's Golden Age, the nineteenth century, that he had long been (at the age of eighty) a wealthy man. Money was to him the symbol of a well-spent, well-ordered life, provocative of warmth in his heart because he loved his children, and was careful of them to a fault. He did not marry till he was forty-five, but his feeling for the future of his family manifested itself with the birth of his first child. Selecting a fair and high locality, not too far away

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from London, he set himself at once to make a country place, where the little things should have fresh air, new milk, and all the fruits of the earth, home-grown round them. Quite wonderful was the forethought he lavished on that house and little estate stretching down the side of a hill, with its walled gardens, pasture, corn-land and coppice. All was solid, and of the best, from the low four-square red brick house with its concrete terrace and French windows, to the cow-houses down by the coppice. From the oak trees, hundreds of years old, on the lawns, to the peach trees just planted along the south sunny walls. But here too, there was no display for the sake of it, and no extravagance. Everything was at hand, from home-baked bread, to mushrooms wild and tame; from the stables with their squat clock-tower, to pigsties; from the roses that won all the local prizes, to bluebells; but nothing redundant or pretentious.

The place was an endless pleasure to him, who to the last preserved his power of taking interest, not only in great, but in little things. Each small triumph over difficulty—the securing of hot water in such a quarter, the better lighting of another, the rescue of the nectarines from wasps, the quality of his Alderney cows, the encouragement of rooks—afforded him as much simple and sincere satisfaction as every little victory he achieved in his profession, or in the life of the Companies which he directed. But with all his shrewd practical sense, and almost naive pleasure in material advantage, he combined a very real spiritual life of his own. Nor was there anything ascetic in that inner life. It was mellow as the music of Mozart, his most beloved composer; Art and Nature both had their part in it. He was, for instance, very fond of opera, but only when it could be called ‘grand’; and it grieved him that opera was no longer what it had been, yet was it secretly a grave satisfaction that he had known those classical glories denied to the present generation. He loved indeed almost all classical music, but (besides Mozart) especially Beethoven, Gluck, and Meyerbeer, whom he insisted (no less than Herbert Spencer) on considering a

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great composer. Wagner he tried very hard to appreciate and, after visiting Bayruth, even persuaded himself that he had succeeded, though he never ceased to point out the great difference that existed between this person and Mozart. He loved the Old Masters of painting, having for favourites amongst the Italians : Rafael, Correggio, Titian, Tintoretto ; and amongst Englishmen Reynolds and Romney. On the other hand, he regarded Hogarth and Rubens as coarse, but Vandyke he very much admired, because of his beautiful painting of hands, the hall-mark, he would maintain, of an artist's quality. I cannot remember his feeling about Rembrandt, but Turner he certainly distrusted as extravagant. Botticelli and the earlier masters he had not as yet quite learned to relish ; and Impressionism, including Whistler, never really made conquest of his taste, though he always resolutely kept his mind open to what was modern—feeling himself young at heart.

Once on a spring day, getting over a stile, I remember him saying :

' Eighty ! I can't believe it. Seems very queer. I don't feel it. Eighty ! ' And, pointing to a blackbird that was singing, he added : ' That takes the years off you ! ' His love of Nature was very intimate, simple, and unconscious. I can see him standing by the pond of a summer evening watching the great flocks of starlings that visited those fields ; or, with his head a little to one side, listening rapturously to a skylark. He would contemplate, too, with a sort of serene passion, sunset effects, and every kind of view.

But his greatest joy in life had been his long summer holidays, in Italy or among the Alps, and his memory was a perfect storehouse of peaks, passes, and arrivals at Italian inns. He had been a great walker, and, as an old man, was still very active. I can remember him on horseback at the age of sixty, though he had never been a sportsman—not being in the way of hunting, having insufficient patience for fishing, and preferring to spend such time as he might have had for shooting, in communing with his beloved mountains. His love for all

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kinds of beauty, indeed, was strangely potent; and perhaps the more natural and deep for its innocence of all tradition and formal culture. He got it, I think, from his mother, of whom he always spoke with reverence as 'the most beautiful woman in the Three Towns'. Yes, his love of beauty was a sensuous, warm glow pervading the whole of him, secretly separating him from the majority of his associates. A pretty face, a beautiful figure, a mellow tune, the sight of dancing, a blackbird's song, the moon behind a poplar tree, starry nights, sweet scents, and the language of Shakespeare—all these moved him deeply, the more perhaps because he had never learned to express his feelings. His attempts at literature indeed were strangely naive and stilted; his verse, in the comic vein, rather good; but all, as it were, like his period, ashamed to express any intimate feeling except in classical language. Yet his literary tastes were catholic; Milton was his favourite poet, Byron he also admired; Browning he did not care for; his favourite novelist was George Eliot, and, curiously enough—in later life—Turgenev. I well remember when the translated volumes of that author were coming out, how he would ask for another of those yellow books. He did not know why he liked them, with all those 'crackjaw' Russian names; but assuredly it was because they were written by one who worshipped beauty.

The works of Dickens and Thackeray he read with appreciation, on the whole, finding the first perhaps a little too grotesque, and the second a little too satiric. Scott, Trollope, Marryat, Blackmore, Hardy, and Mark Twain also pleased him; but Meredith he thought too 'misty'.

A great theatre-goer all his life, he was very lukewarm towards modern actors, comparing them adversely with those constellations of the past, Edmund and Charles Kean, Charlie Mathews, Farren, Power, 'little Robson', and Helen Faucit. He was, however, a great lover of Kate Vaughan's dancing; an illustration of the equanimity of one who had formed his taste on Taglioni.

Irving he would only accept in *Louis XI*, *The Bells*,



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and, I think, *Charles I* and for his mannerisms he had a great aversion. There was something of the old grand manner about his theatre habits. He attended with the very best and thinnest lavender kid gloves on his hands, which he would hold up rather high and clap together at the end of an act which pleased him ; even, on memorable occasions, adding the word 'Bravo'. He never went out before the end of a play, however vehemently he might call it 'poor stuff', which, to be quite honest, he did about nine times out of ten. And he was ever ready to try again, having a sort of touching confidence in an art which had betrayed him so often. His opera hats were notable, usually of such age as to have lost shape, and surely the largest in London. Indeed, his dress was less varied than that of any man I have ever seen ; but always neat and well-cut, for he went habitually to the best shops, and without eccentricity of any kind. He carried a repeating gold watch and thin round gold chain which passed, smooth and sinuous as a little snake, through a small black seal with a bird on it ; and he never abandoned very well made side-spring boots with cork soles, greatly resenting the way other boots dirtied his hands, which were thin and brown with long polished nails, and blue veins outstanding. For reading only, he wore tortoise-shell eyeglasses, which he would perch low down on the bridge of his nose, so that he could look over them, for his eyes were very long-sighted. He was extremely fastidious in his linen, and all personal matters, yet impatient of being mollycoddled, or in any way over-valeted. Even on the finest days, he carried an umbrella, the ferrule of which, from his habit of stumping it on the pavement, had a worn and harassed look, and was rarely more than half present.

Having been a Conservative Liberal in politics till well past sixty, it was not until Disraeli's time that he became a Liberal Conservative. This was curious, for he always spoke doubtfully of 'Dizzy', and even breathed the 'humbug' in connexion with him. Probably he was offended by what he termed 'the extravagance' in Dizzy's

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rival. For the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Salisbury he had respect without enthusiasm; and conceived for John Bright a great admiration as soon as he was dead. But on the whole the politician who had most attracted him had been Palmerston, because—if memory serves—he had in such admirable degree the faculty of ‘astonishing their weak nerves’. For, though never a Jingo, and in later days both cautious and sane in his Imperialism, he had all a Briton’s essential deep-rooted distrust of the foreigner. He felt that they were not quite safe, not quite sound, and must from time to time be made to feel this. Born two years after the Battle of Waterloo, he had inherited a certain high pride of island birth. And yet in one case, where he was for years in close contact with a foreigner, he conceived for him so grave a respect, that it was quite amusing to watch the discomfiture of his traditional distrust. It was often a matter of wonder amongst those who knew him that a man of his ability and judgment had never even sought to make his mark in public affairs. Of the several reasons for this, the chief was, undoubtedly, the extraordinary balance of his temperament. To attain pre-eminence in any definite department of life would have warped and stunted too many of his instincts, removed too many of his interests; and so he never specialized in anything. He was quite unambitious, always taking the lead in whatever field he happened to be, by virtue of his great capacity and will-power, but never pushing himself, and apparently without any life-aim, but that of leading a sane, moderate, and harmonious existence.

And it is for this that he remains written on the national page, as the type of a lost and golden time, when life to each man seemed worth living for its own sake, without thought of its meaning as a whole, or much speculation as to its end. There was something classical, measured, and mellow in his march adown the years, as if he had been god-mothered by Harmony. And yet, though he said his prayers and went to church, he could not fairly have been called a religious man; for at the time when he formed his religious habits, ‘religion’

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had as yet received no shocks, and reigned triumphant over an unconscious nation whose spirit was sleeping ; and when ' religion ', disturbed to its foundations, began to die, and people all round him were just becoming religious enough to renounce the beliefs they no longer held, he was too old to change, and continued to employ the mechanism of a creed which had never really been vital to him. He was in essence pagan: all was right with his world ! His love was absorbed by Nature, and his wonder by the Great Starry Scheme he felt all around. This was God to him ; for it was ever in the presence of the stars that he was most moved to a sense of divine order. Looking up at those tremulous cold companions he seemed more reverent, and awed, than ever he was in the face of creeds or his fellow man. Whether stirred by the sheer beauty of Night, or by its dark immensity swarming with those glittering worlds, he would stand silent, and then, perhaps, say wistfully : ' What little bits of things we are ! Poor little wretches ! ' Yes, it was then that he really worshipped, adoring the great wonders of Eternity. No one ever heard him talk with conviction of a future life. He was far too self-reliant to accept what he was told, save by his own inner voice ; and that did not speak to him with certainty. In fact, as he grew old, to be uncertain of all such high things was part of his real religion ; it seemed to him, I think, impertinent to pretend to intimate knowledge of what was so much bigger than himself. But neither his conventional creed, nor that awed uncertainty which was his real religion were ever out of hand ; they jogged smoothly on in double harness, driven and guided by a suprema power—his reverence for Life. He abhorred fanaticism. In this he truly mirrored the spirit of that great peacefully expanding river, the Victorian Era, which began when he came of age. And yet, in speaking before him of deep or abstract things, it was not safe to reckon without his criticism, which would sometimes make powerfully shrewd deductions out of the sheer logical insight of a nature neither fundamentally concerned with other worlds, nor brought up to the ways

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of discussion. He was pre-eminently the son of a time between two ages—a past age of old, unquestioning faith in Authority; a future age of new faith, already born but not yet grown. Still sheltering in the shade of the old tree which was severed at the roots and toppling, he never, I think, clearly saw—though he may have had glimpses—that men, like children whose mother has departed from their home, were slowly being forced to trust in, and be good to, themselves and to one another, and so to form out of their necessity, desperately, unconsciously, their new great belief in Humanity. Yes, he was the son of a *time between two ages*—the product of an era without real faith—an individualist to the core.

His attitude towards the poor, for instance, was essentially that of man to man. Save that he could not tolerate impostors (one of his favourite words), and saw through them with almost startling rapidity, he was compassionate to any who had fallen on evil fortune, and especially to those who had been in any way connected with him. But in these almonary transactions he was always particularly secretive, as if rather doubting their sagacity, and the wisdom of allowing them to become known—himself making up and despatching the parcels of old clothes, and rather surreptitiously producing such coins and writing such cheques as were necessary. But 'the poor', in bulk, were always to him the concern of the Poor Law, pure and simple, and in no sense of the individual citizen. It was the same with malefactors, he might pity as well as condemn them, but the idea that the society to which he and they belonged was in any way responsible for them, would never have occurred to him. His sense of justice, like that of his period, was fundamentally based on the notion that every man had started with equal, or at all events, with quite sufficient opportunities, and must be judged as if he had. But, indeed, it was not the custom in his day to concern oneself with problems outside one's own class. Within that class, and in all matters domestic, no man was ever born with a nicer sense of justice. It was never overridden by his affections; very seldom, and that with a certain

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charming *naïveté*, by his interests. This sense of justice, however, in no way prevented him from being loved; for, in spite of a temper apt to take fire, flare up, and quickly die down again, he was one of the most lovable of men. There was not an ounce of dourness or asperity in his composition. His laughter was of a most infectious kind, singularly spontaneous and delightful, resembling the laughter of a child. The change which a joke wrought in the aspect of his large, dignified, and rather noble face, was disconcerting. It became wrinkled, or, as it were, crumpled; and such a twinkling overcame his eyes as was frequently only to be extinguished by moisture. 'That's rich!' was his favourite expression to describe what had tickled him; for he had preserved the use of Devonshire expressions, bringing them forth, from an intimate pet drawer of memory, and lingering over them with real gusto. He still loved, too, such Devonshire dishes of his boyhood, as 'junket' and 'toad in the hole'; and one of his favourite memories was that of the meals snatched at the old coaching Inn at Exeter, while they changed the horses of the Plymouth to the London coach. 'Twenty-four hours at ten miles an hour, without ever a break! Glorious drive! Glorious the joints of beef, the cherry brandy! Glorious the old stage coachman, a 'monstrous fat chap' who at that time ruled the road!

In the city, where his office was situate, he was wont, though at all times a very moderate eater, to frequent substantial, old-fashioned hostelrys such as Roche's, Pim's, or Birch's, in preference to newer and more pretentious places of refreshment. He had a remarkable palate too, and though he drank very little, was, in his prime, considered as fine a judge of wine as any in London. Of tea he was particularly fond, and always consumed the very best Indian, made with extreme care, maintaining that the Chinese variety was only fit for persons of no taste.

He had little liking for his profession, believing it to be beneath him, and that Heaven had intended him for an advocate; in which he was probably right, for his

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masterful acumen could not have failed to assure him a foremost position at the Bar. And in him, I think, it is certain that a great Judge was lost to the State. Despite this contempt for what he called the 'pettifogging' character of his occupation, he always inspired profound respect in his clients ; and among the shareholders of his Companies, of which he directed several, his integrity and judgment stood so high that he was enabled to pursue successfully a line of policy often too comprehensive and far-seeing for the temper of the times. The reposeful dignity and courage, of his head and figure when facing an awkward General Meeting, could hardly have been exceeded. He sat, as it were, remote from its gusty temper, quietly determining its course.

Truly memorable were his conflicts with the only other man of his calibre on those Boards, and I cannot remember that he was ever beaten. He was at once the quicker tempered and more cautious. And if he had not the other's stoicism and iron nerve, he saw further into the matter in hand, was more unremitting in his effort, equally tenacious of purpose, and more magnetic. In fact, he had a way with him.

But, after all said, it was in his dealings with children that the best and sweetest side of his personality was manifested. With them he became completely tender, inexhaustibly interested in their interests, absurdly patient, and as careful as a mother. No child ever resisted him, or even dreamed of doing so. From the first moment they loved his white hair and beard, his 'feathers' as one little thing called them. They liked the touch of his thin hand, which was never wet or cold ; and, holding to it, were always ready to walk with him—wandering with complete unanimity, not knowing quite where or for what reason. How often have I not watched him starting out on that high adventure with his grandson, his face turned gravely down towards a smaller face turned not quite so gravely up ; and heard their voices tremendously concerned with all the things they might be going to do together ! How often have I not seen them coming back, tired as cats, but still concerned about

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what was next going to happen! And children were always willing to play cricket with him because he bowled to them very slowly, pitching up what he called 'three-quarter' balls, and himself always getting 'out' almost before he went in. For, although he became in his later years a great connoisseur of cricket, spending many days at Lord's or the Oval, choosing out play of the very highest class, and quite impatient of the Eton and Harrow Match, he still performed in a somewhat rococo fashion, as of a man taught in the late twenties of the last century, and having occasion to revive that knowledge about 1895. He bent his back knee, and played with a perfectly crooked bat, to the end that when he did hit the ball, which was not too often, it invariably climbed the air. There was, too, about his batting, a certain vein of recklessness or bravado, somewhat out of keeping with his general character, so that, as has been said, he was never in too long. And when he got out he would pitch the bat down as if he were annoyed, which would hugely please his grandson, showing of course that he had been trying his very best, as indeed, he generally had. But his bowling was extremely impressive, being effected with very bent knees, and a general air of first putting the ball to the eye, as if he were playing bowls; in this way he would go on and on giving the boy 'an innings', and getting much too hot. In fielding he never could remember on the spur of the moment whether it was his knees or his feet that he ought to close; and this, in combination with a habit of bending rather cautiously, because he was liable to lumbago, detracted somewhat from his brilliance; but when the ball was once in his hands, it was most exciting—impossible to tell whether he would throw it at the running batsman, the wicket, or the bowler, according as the game appeared to him at the moment to be double wicket, single wicket, or rounders. He had lived in days when games were not the be-all and end-all of existence, and had never acquired a proper seriousness in such matters. Those who passed from cricket with him to cricket in the cold wide world found

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a change for which at first they were unable to account. But even more fascinating to children than his way of playing cricket was his perfect identification with whatever might be the matter in hand. The examination of a shell, the listening to the voice of the sea imprisoned in it, the making of a cocked hat out of the *Times* newspaper, the doing up of little buttons, the feeding of pigeons with crumbs, the holding fast of a tiny leg while walking beside a pony, all these things absorbed him completely, so, that no visible trace was left of the man whose judgment on affairs was admirable and profound. Nor, whatever the provocation, could he ever bring himself to point the moral of anything to a child, having that utter toleration of their foibles which only comes from a natural and perfectly unconscious love of being with them. His face, habitually tranquil, wore in their presence a mellow look of almost devil-may-care serenity.

Their sayings, too, he treasured, as though they were pearls. First poems, such as :

I sorr a worm,  
It was half-ly dead ;  
I took a great spud,  
And speared through his head,

were to him of singular fair promise. Their diagnoses of character, moreover, especially after visiting a circus, filled him with pure rapture, and he would frequently repeat this one:

‘ Father, is Uncle a clever man ? ’

‘ H’m ! well—yes, certainly. ’

‘ I never seen no specimens. He can’t balance a pole on his nose, for instance. ’

To the declining benison of their prayers, from their ‘ darling father and mother ’, to ‘ all poor people who are in distress ’, he loved to listen, not so much for the sentiments expressed, as because, in their little night-gowns, they looked so sweet, and were so roundabout in their way of getting to work.

Yes, children were of all living things his chosen friends, and they knew it.



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But in his long life he made singularly few fast friendships with grown-up people, and, as far as I know, no enemies. For there was in him, despite his geniality, a very strong vein of fastidiousness, and such essential deep love of domination, that he found, perhaps, few men of his own age and standing to whom he did not feel natively superior. His most real and lifelong friendship was for a certain very big man with a profound hatred of humbug and a streak of 'the desperate character' in him. They held each other in the highest esteem, or, as they would probably have put it, swore by one another; the one grumbling at, but reverencing, the other's high and resolute equanimity; the other deploring and admiring the one's deep and generous recklessness. The expressions: 'Just like John, the careful fellow!' 'Just like Sil, reckless beggar!' were always on their lips; for like all their generation they were sparing of encomium; and great, indeed, must have been their emotion before they would show their feelings. Dear as they were to each other's hearts, they never talked together of spiritual things, they never spoke in generalities, but gravely smoking their cigars, discussed their acquaintances, investments, wine, their nephews and grandchildren, and the affairs of the State—condemning the advertising fashion in which everything was now done. Once in a way they would tell a story—but they knew each other's stories too well; once in a way quote a line of Byron, Shakespeare, or Milton; or whistle to each other, inharmoniously, a bar or two from some song that Grisi, Mario, or Jenny Lind had sung. Once in a way memories of the heyday of their youth, those far-off golden hours, stealing over them, they would sit silent, with their grave steady eyes following the little rings of bluish smoke. . . . Yes, for all their lack of demonstration, they loved each other well.

I seem still to see the subject of this portrait standing at his friend's funeral one bleak November day, the pale autumn sunlight falling on the silver of his uncovered head a little bowed, and on his grave face, for once so

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sad. I hear the tones of his voice, still full and steady ; and from the soul of his eyes, looking, as it were, through and through those forms of death to some deep conclusion of his own, I know how big and sane and sweet he was.

His breed is dying now ; it has nearly gone. But as I remember him and that great quiet forehead, with his tenderness, and his glance which travelled to the heart of what it rested on, I despair of seeing his like again. For, with him there seems to me to have passed away a principle, a golden rule of life, nay, more, a spirit—the soul of Balance. It has stolen away, as in the early morning the stars steal out of the sky. *He* knew its tranquil secret, and where he is, there must it still be hovering.



## NOTES

### THACKERAY : *Goldsmith*

Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811, the son of an official of the East India Company. His father died in 1816, and next year he was sent to England for his education. He attended the Charterhouse School, London, and Trinity College, Cambridge, but at both places made no impression on his fellow-students or teachers. Both at school and college he was known as an idle young man, whose chief source of delight was to sketch and lampoon his friends and enemies. He left the University without taking a degree, and then went to Paris to study art. But he soon lost all his private fortune on account of unfortunate investments, and then thought of earning his living by his pen. He contributed articles and light verse to several periodicals and these won him the recognition of the public. He only became famous, however, when he published *Vanity Fair*. This was followed by several masterpieces like *Pendennis*, *Henry Esmond* and *The Newcomes*, which placed the author among the foremost men of letters of the day. He edited a journal for some time, and was also sought as a lecturer on both sides of the Atlantic. He delivered two courses of lectures which were published as *The English Humourists*, (from which the following extract on Goldsmith is taken) and *The Four Georges*. He died in 1863, leaving an unfinished novel. The most notable qualities of Thackeray are his power of drawing real living characters, his humour and satire, and his power of entering into and drawing the life of the eighteenth century. Goldsmith shares with Thackeray all these characteristics, as well as his fluent and clear style, his habit of moralizing and his essential kindly nature.

a book and a poem : *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Deserted Village*.

*Auburn* : in this village of Goldsmith's creation the scene of *The Deserted Village* is laid.

*Wakefield* : the scene of Goldsmith's inimitable novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

*Lissoy* : in Ireland. Many persons identify it with 'Auburn'.

*Dr. Primrose* : the central figure in the *Vicar of Wakefield*. He was a genial, kind-hearted man, as attractive for his moral qualities as for his foibles. Goldsmith took many hints in drawing this character from his father.

*Swift* : Jonathan (1647-1745), one of the greatest of English prose satirists, wrote *Gulliver's Travels*, a wonderful story-book full of veiled but often deadly satire.

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- Paddy Byrne* : 'Goldsmith was sent in his seventh year to a village school kept by an old quarter-master on half-pay.'
- Noll* : short for 'Nolly', which is short for Oliver.
- '*Mistake of a Night*' : the sub-title of *She Stoops to Conquer*, a delightful and lively comedy by Goldsmith, whose plot was based on this incident.
- Æsop* : the well-known Greek fabulist, whose name is a bye-word for ugliness and buffoonery.
- Hades* : in Greek mythology, the abode of departed spirits.
- Until lately* : in 1837 the pane was removed from the window and placed in Trinity College Library.
- Prodigal* : see Luke xv. 11-32.
- a year with one patron* : in the capacity of a tutor.
- the Temple* : formerly the establishment of Knights Templars in London.
- Farheim, Du Petit* : two famous professors of Anatomy and Surgery at the Jardin des Plantes, Paris.
- Monceau* : a celebrated botanist who wrote many books on agriculture.
- Ballymahon* : near Lissoy, where Goldsmith's mother stayed after her husband's death.
- But.....own* : from *The Traveller*.
- Fielding* : Henry (1707-1754), styled by Scott the 'Father of the English Novel'.
- London Court* : where Goldsmith lived for some time.
- give the coals* : 'While they were conversing, a poor ragged little girl of very decent behaviour entered, who, dropping a curtsy, said, "My mamma sends her compliments and begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coals."'
- print of me* : for this incident, see Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*.
- Sir Joshua Reynolds* : (1723-1792), an English portrait-painter and founder of the Literary Club of which Dr. Johnson, Garrick, Burke, Goldsmith and others were members.
- One of his old pupils* : one Mr. Samuel Bishop.
- Beattie* : James (1735-1803), a Scottish poet and essayist, whose only title to fame is his poem *The Minstrel*.
- Sterne* : Laurence (1713-1768), wrote *Tristram Shandy* which is a classic of English prose fiction.
- Kelly* : Hugh, a stay-maker, who took to writing popular sentimental comedies.
- Newbery* : John (1713-1767), a London bookseller who was the first to publish little books for children.
- Colman* : George (1732-1794), 'the Elder', a playwright and manager.
- comedy* : '*She Stoops to Conquer*.'
- Johnson* : Samuel (1709-1784), an English poet, essayist and lexicographer, who was a sort of literary monarch in his day. Boswell has immortalized him in his *Life of Johnson*.
- Gibbon* : Edward (1737-1794), an English historian whose monumental work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is

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unsurpassed for its glowing imagination, epical breadth of treatment and stately diction.

*Burke* : Edmund (1729-1797), one of the foremost orators and political thinkers of England.

*Fox* : Charles James (1749-1806), whom Burke called 'the greatest debater the world ever saw'.

*Pope* : Alexander (1688-1744), the foremost poet of his time, known for his didactic and satirical verse.

*a letter* : see Forster's *Life*, book ii, chap. v.

*Boswell* : James (1740-1795), the Scottish biographer of Dr. Johnson.

*Here, as I take* : from *The Deserted Village*.

*Utopia* : an imaginary island described by Sir Thomas More in his book of the same name as an ideal state; hence an imaginary country or a place of ideal perfection.

*Yvetot* : a small town in France celebrated in one of the songs of Béranger. Here it means a place of ideal happiness.

*The Club* : The Literary Club referred to above.

*Lord Clare*, . . . *Lord Nugent* : Goldsmith, with his characteristic vanity, liked to air his friendship with the big and aristocratic people of London. Lord Clare and Lord Nugent were the same person. Mr. Robert Nugent, Comptroller of the Prince of Wales' Household, was the only patron Goldsmith had.

*My Lord Bishop* : the reference is perhaps to Bishop Percy.

*Ranelagh* : famous gardens near London where concerts and masquerades were performed.

*the Pantheon* : a place in Oxford Street noted for its dancing and theatricals.

*Madame Cornelys* : a Venetian who opened a house in London where balls and concerts were held that attracted fashionable and wealthy people.

*the Jessamy Bride* : Jessamy is another form of Jasmine. Goldsmith was in love with her : the name Goldsmith gave to the youngest of the charming Horneck sisters.

*Bunbury* : Henry William (1750-1811), a famous caricaturist.

*Gillray* : James (1757-1815), a caricaturist of great powers.

*Garrick* : David (1717-1779), an actor of the first rank.

*Northcole* : James, R.A. (1746-1831), painted portraits and historical pictures.

*Hazlitt* : William (1778-1830), a famous essayist and critic.

*The younger Colman* : son of George Colman, wrote plays like his father.

*'I plucked his gown. . . '* : from *The Deserted Village*.

*the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph* : Dr. Johnson.

*Dick Steele* : Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729), a celebrated writer of essays, figures in Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*.

*Tatler* : a tri-weekly paper edited by Steele.

*running races with the constable* : getting into debt.

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*The Citizen of the World* : the title of a volume of essays written by Goldsmith.

*Prior* : Matthew (1664-1721), a poet who went to Paris as ambassador.

*Addison* : Joseph (1672-1719), one of the first of English essayists. He was appointed Secretary of State, but resigned his post owing to failing health.

### MACAULAY : *Frederic the Great*

Macaulay was born in 1800 in Leicestershire, the son of Zachary Macaulay, a zealous worker in the cause of negro emancipation. As a boy, he went to no school, but received his education at home from private tutors. Later on, he went to Cambridge, where he twice won the Chancellor's Medal for English verse. As an undergraduate, and even earlier in his life, he was distinguished for his prodigious memory and his insatiable appetite for books. He left Cambridge after taking high honours, and then began to study law. He was called to the Bar, but this by no means exhausted all his energy. His father's business having failed, he began to contribute reviews and essays to *The Edinburgh Review* to earn his living; and these brought him money as well as fame. In 1830 he entered Parliament as a Whig, and soon distinguished himself as a powerful speaker. In the meantime, he was offered membership of the Supreme Council in India, which he accepted. He stayed in India for four years and drafted the Indian Penal Code. After this he returned to England and re-entered political life. He held important offices, and in 1857 was raised to the peerage. He died in 1859 without completing his *History of England*, which, he had hoped, would supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies. Though a writer of spirited verse full of action and colour, he is chiefly remembered for his *History* which won instantaneous popularity on account of its selection of picturesque details, its clear and rapid narrative and its copious vocabulary. All these characteristics are found also in his essays, though some of the best are marred by his tendency to exaggerate and his over-fondness for antithesis.

*Lewis XIV* : King of France (1643-1715).

*Richelieu* : (1585-1642), the famous French cardinal and statesman.

*Mazarin* : (1602-1661), Prime Minister of Louis XIV.

*Colbert, Louvois, Torcy* : ministers of Louis XIV.

*Potsdam* : where the royal palaces of the King of Prussia stood.

*Lewis XV* : King of France (1715-1774) who lost Canada and other colonies.

*Villars* : (1653-1734), Marshal of France.

*Eugène* : Prince of Savoy (1663-1746), a great Austrian general.

*Joseph Hume* : (1777-1855), an English politician.

*Monmouth Street* : a quarter of London frequented by dealers in old clothes.

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*George II* : King of Great Britain (1727-1760).

*Lampoon* : a virulent satire, of a malicious and abusive character.

*Vatican* : the Pope's palace at Rome ; here the papal authority or government.

*Lyons* : a commercial and manufacturing city in France.

*Leyden or Gottingen* : the great Universities of Holland and Hanover.

*Sièyès* : Emanuel Joseph (1748-1836), the political writer and thinker who played such an important part in the French Revolution.

*Commodus* : a Roman Emperor (180-192).

*Alcina* : a fairy in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* who, like Circe, metamorphosed her lovers.

*Sleeping in a bulk* : this phrase seems to be equivalent to living in low company : a ' bulk ' is properly a framework projecting from a shop-front, hence a stall.

*Voltaire* : (1694-1778), a French philosopher who also wrote tales, satires, comedies and tragedies.

*Montesquieu* : (1689-1755), a French political philosopher.

*Buffon* : (1707-1788), a great natural historian.

*Racine* : (1639-1699), a great French dramatist.

*Crébillon* : a French dramatist.

*Baculard D'Arnaud* : a dull and voluminous writer who died in 1805.

*Saxe* : Hermann Maurice, Count de Saxe (1696-1750), Marshal of France.

*Harpagon* : the hero of one of Molière's comedies. He is a notorious usurer and miser.

*Scapin* : a tricky valet in one of Molière's comedies. He is employed by two lovers, and succeeds in outwitting their fathers who have other marriage plans for them.

*D'Argens* : (1704-1771) an author who acted as Director in Frederick Literary Academy.

*Guichard and La Métrie* : French authors.

' *I forewarn thee, shun, etc.* ' : from Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

*Grub-street writer* : a petty needy writer who inhabited Grub-street, a street in old London, which was the home of hacks.

*Dunciad* : a satirical poem by Pope in which he castigated the minor writers of the day.

*Maupertuis* : (1698-1759), a mathematician whom Frederic the Great made President of the Berlin Academy. Voltaire satirized him in one of his works.

*Patagonian* : an inhabitant of Patagonia, considered to be the tallest of men.

*Count Bruhl* : a chief minister of Poland and a bitter enemy of Prussia.

*Lake Leman* : in Switzerland, forms the subject of one of Byron's poems.

*Constituent Assembly* : the first of the Revolutionary assemblies in France.



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*Vitruvius* : a Roman architect and engineer.

*Capuchins* : Franciscan monks known for their austerity, and so called because they wore a long pointed cowl.

*Antichrist* : one who denies or opposes Christ.

### NEWMAN : *Poetry*

John Henry Newman was born in 1801 in the city of London. His father was a banker, and his mother a devout Calvinist who influenced his early religious views. He was educated at Ealing and Trinity College, Oxford. Though his University career was not very distinguished, yet he was elected a fellow of Oriel. Here he made many friendships, especially with bright and thoughtful young men. In 1824 he was ordained, and some years after became Vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford. His fervent preaching and winning personality made this church a centre of great influence and attracted to it throngs of hearers. But then there came a spiritual crisis in his life. Up to this time he had held 'Low Church' beliefs, but the study of ecclesiastical history made him abandon them. He and his friends, therefore, put forth their views in a series of *Tracts for the Times*, which raised a bitter controversy. All this spiritual conflict and unrest found expression in some of his poems, especially the hymn 'Lead, Kindly Light'. In the end, along with many others, he joined the Roman Catholic Church, a fact which caused much discomfort to his erstwhile admirers. As a Catholic, he joined the brotherhood of the Oratorians. He established a branch of this order at Edgbaston, near Birmingham, where he spent nearly the whole of his remaining life. He died in 1890, after having been made a Cardinal in 1879.

Newman exerted a powerful influence on the religious life of the day, but he was equally important as a man of letters. Take any of his works; *The Idea of a University*, *Lectures on Anglican Difficulties*, *the Historical Sketches* or *the Sermons*, and therein you will find his ease and urbanity, his scholarly eloquence and delightfully rhythmical prose.

*Aristotle* : (384-323 B.C.). one of the most renowned of the Greek philosophers, whose works on rhetoric, ethics, poetry and politics are classical in their own way.

'*Poesis nihil, etc*': 'Poetry is merely an arbitrary imitation of fact.'

*Bacon* : Francis (1561-1625), a well-known English philosopher, historian and essayist.

*Old Phoenix* : See the *Iliad*, bk. ix, 449-453.

*Nurse of Orestes* : see *Chæphoræ*, 736-749.

'*Chæphoræ*': by Æschylus.

*Lord Byron* : (1788-1824), the most popular of the English romantic poets, author of *Childe Harold*, *Don Juan*, etc.

*Empedocles* : a Sicilian philosopher, poet and historian who wrote a long poem in support of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

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- Oppian* : a Greek poet who wrote on such odd subjects as fishing and hunting.
- Thomson* : James (1700-1748), wrote *The Seasons* which contains fine descriptions of natural scenery.
- ' *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso* ' : literally ' The Cheerful Man ' and ' The Pensive Man ', two of the best known of Milton's shorter poems.
- Virgil* : (70-19 B.C.), the most famous of Latin poets, wrote the *Æneid*, *Georgics* and *Eclogues*.
- Pope* : Alexander Pope (1688-1744), an English poet who wrote, besides other works, *Pastorals*.
- ' *Peveril of the Peak* ' : a novel by Sir Walter Scott.
- ' *Brambletye House* ' : one of the best novels written by Horace Smith (1779-1849).
- Charles II* : King of England (1660-1685).
- Miss Edgeworth* : (1767-1849), wrote a number of novels dealing chiefly with Irish life.
- Richard* : see Shakespeare's *Richard II*.
- Iago* : see Shakespeare's *Othello*.
- Clytemnestra* : she killed her husband, Agamemnon, and married her accomplice Ægysthus. In the end both of them were put to death by Orestes.
- Euripides* : (480-406 B.C.), one of the great Greek dramatists who wrote some fine tragedies.
- Ophelia* : the daughter of Polonius, with whom Hamlet was in love.
- The Bride of Lammermoor* : the heroine of the novel of that name by Sir Walter Scott.
- Southey* : Robert (1774-1843), one of the Lake Poets.
- Ladurlad* : the name of a character in Southey's *Curse of Kehama*.
- Thalaba and Roderick* : the heroes respectively of Southey's poems, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, and *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*.
- Old Robin Gray* : a well-known ballad by Lady Ann Barnard.
- Cowper* : William (1731-1800), an English poet whose *Lines on his Mother's Picture* are very tender in sentiment and genuine in appeal.
- Milman* : Henry Hart (1791-1868), an English divine, poet and historian.
- ' *The Martyr of Antioch* ' : a drama by Milman, based on the life of St. Margaret.
- Milton* : John (1608-1674), an English poet whose *Sonnet on his Blindness* is remarkable for stately diction and the loftiness of the sentiment expressed.
- Bernard Barton* : a Quaker poet who was a great friend of Charles Lamb.
- Campbell* : Thomas (1777-1844), an English poet who wrote many war lyrics.
- Joanna Baillie* : (1762-1851), a writer well-known in her day, but now almost forgotten.

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**Gray** : Thomas (1716-1771), the poet who wrote the famous *Elegy*.  
(For the poems mentioned in this paragraph, consult the *Oxford Book of English Verse*.)

**Young** : Edward (1684-1765), who wrote *Night Thoughts*.

'*Sic dicet*' : 'He will speak in such a way as to turn one and the same thing in various ways, while preserving the thought.'

**Cicero** : (106-43 B.C.), the famous Roman orator, statesman and man of letters.

**Juvenal** : a celebrated Roman satirist.

**Crabbe** : George (1754-1832), an English realistic poet.

'*The Waverley Novels*' : by Sir Walter Scott.

'*Kenilworth*', '*Ivanhoe*' and '*Old Mortality*' : three of the best novels by Sir Walter Scott.

**The Corsair** : the hero of Byron's poem of that name.

**Tityrus** : see Virgil's *First Eclogue*, 59.

**Sardanapalus** and **Myrrha** : the hero and heroine of Byron's tragedy, *Sardanapalus*.

**Spenser** : Edmund (1552-1599), a poet contemporary with Shakespeare. He has been described as our 'sage and serious Spenser'.

**Dryden** : an English poet and dramatist who also wrote some fine songs like *Alexander's Feast*.

**Manfred** : a play by Lord Byron.

**Hume** : a Scottish historian and philosopher.

**Rousseau** : (1712-1778), the famous French philosopher and author who was the great Apostle of Naturalism.

**Lucretius** : a Roman poet and philosopher.

**Moore** : Thomas, an Irish poet and wit.

**Sophocles** : a great Greek tragic poet.

### DICKENS : *The Italian Prisoner*

Charles Dickens was born in 1812 at Landport, his father being a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. He spent his childhood at Chatham and Rochester, towns often described in his stories. As a boy, he became very fond of the novels of Smollett and Fielding, both of whom influenced his own novels a great deal. At this time also he came to like the theatre, a fact which affected his work considerably. In 1823 his father came to London, where began the trials and triumphs of Dickens. At first he suffered a good many vicissitudes. His father, a thriftless, improvident fellow, got into money difficulties and became an inmate of a debtor's prison. In the meantime, Dickens worked in a blacking factory. When his father's financial condition improved, the education of Dickens was taken in hand. He did not, however, receive much of a regular schooling, but taught himself shorthand and became a reporter. He wrote short sketches for publication which attracted some notice. Then came the chance of his life.

He was engaged to write a story to accompany a series of illustrations. The result was *Pickwick Papers*—and money and fame.

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After this he wrote a large number of novels which won him popularity such as has seldom fallen to the lot of any novelist. He also visited Italy, Switzerland and America, and wrote interesting accounts of his travels. He gave readings from his novels which brought him much money, but wore him down physically. He died in 1870 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Three things stand out pre-eminently in the works of Dickens : his imaginative power which enabled him to create so many vital characters, his sympathy with the sufferings of the poor and the unfortunate, and his broad, vivacious and humane humour.

*Neapolitan* : an inhabitant of Naples.

*a-kimbo* : (of the arms) with hands on hips and elbows turned outwards.

*sirocco* : the simoon is so called when it reaches Italy.

*Pompeii* : the city of Pompeii in Italy was destroyed by a violent volcanic eruption. For an account of the destruction of this city, read Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

*Newgate Calendar* : a publication which contained accounts of the prisoners in Newgate, a celebrated London prison.

*English Circumlocution* : in *Little Dorrit* Dickens poured ridicule on government offices where business is delayed by passing through so many hands.

*'took on'* : applied himself to.

*Mr. Cruikshank* : an English caricaturist.

*Parma* : a city in Italy.

*Modena* : a city in Italy.

*Tuscany* : a province of Italy.

*Piazza* : a market-place or public square, especially in an Italian town.

*Signor Mazzini* : (1805-1872), an Italian patriot and revolutionist.

### M. ARNOLD : *Sweetness and Light*

Matthew Arnold was born at Laleham in 1322, the eldest son of Dr. Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby. He was educated at Winchester and Rugby, from where he proceeded to Balliol College, Oxford. Oxford, to which he makes frequent references in his books, exercised a great influence upon his life and thought. In 1847 he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne. In 1851 he was appointed Inspector of Schools—a post which he held till 1885. He was also later on appointed Professor of Poetry at Oxford and went on a lecturing tour to America. He died in 1888 of heart failure. During his lifetime Arnold was thought a 'superior person', but he was grossly misunderstood. His was in reality an earnest, sincere, and sympathetic character.

The importance of his work is threefold. As an Inspector of Schools, he did much to organize and humanize elementary education in England. As a poet, he is well known for his descriptions of natural scenery, his dignity of diction, his moral

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earnestness and his tender melancholy. These may be found best in poems like *Thyrsis*, *The Scholar Gipsy*, *Sohrab and Rustum*. As a critic, he exercised a very wholesome influence on his times through books like *Culture and Anarchy* (from which this extract is taken), *Essays in Criticism*, and *On the Study of Celtic Literature*. With polished irony and gentle ridicule he exposed the deficiencies of the English in culture and asked them to re-examine their modes of thought and action. As a critic of letters, he believed in the ethical importance of poetry.

*M. Sainte-Beuve* : Charles Augustin (1804-1869), a French literary critic.

*Mantesquieu* : (1689-1755), a French jurist and philosopher.

*Bishop Wilson* : (1663-1755), wrote *Maxims of Piety and Christianity*, a book for which Matthew Arnold had great admiration.

*Mr. Bright* : John (1811-1889), an orator of extraordinary powers and a leader of the Free Trade Movement.

*Mr. Frederic Harrison* : (1831-1923), an English literary critic and historian who was a follower of Comte. See biographical note below.

*Jeremiahs* : Jeremiah was a great Hebrew prophet whose strong point was denunciation. Hence 'Jeremiahs' are people who indulge in denunciatory criticism.

*Mr. Roebuck* : John Arthur (1801-1879), an English lawyer and politician.

*England of Elizabeth* : according to Dean Inge, the Elizabethan age is one of the culminating peaks of English history.

*Philistine* : who loves the material and neglects the higher intellectual interests.

*Author of the Epistle to Timothy* : St. Paul. In this Epistle the duties of church officers are defined.

*Franklin* : Benjamin (1706-1790), an American philosopher and statesman.

*Epictetus* : Roman Stoic philosopher.

*Battle of the Books* : 'It is an admirable travesty of the controversy then waging regarding the comparative merits of ancient and modern writers.'

*Pilgrim Fathers* : the 102 separatists from the Church of England who founded New England.

*Establishment* : the Established Church of England.

*Epsom* : a town in Surrey where the famous annual horse-race (the Derby) is held.

*Professor Huxley* : Thomas Henry (1825-1895), an English biologist and man of letters.

*Publice Egestas, Privatim Opulentia* : in public life, penury ; in private, luxury.

*Sallust* : a Roman historian.

*Cato* : a Roman patriot and statesman.

*Mr. Gladstone* : William Ewart (1809-1898), one of the foremost of English statesmen.

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*Mr. Beales* : Edmond (1803-1881), an English lawyer and politician.

*Mr. Bradlaugh* : Charles (1833-1891), a social reformer and secularist.

*the great movement* : the Tractarian Movement.

*the Reform Bill of 1832* : which regulated municipal corporations and the representation of the people in England.

*Mr. Lowe* : Robert, Viscount Sherbrooke (1811-1892), an important English politician in 'Gladstone's ministry of 1868.

*Comte* : Auguste (1798-1857), founder of 'the Religion of Humanity'.

*Bentham* : Jeremy (1748-1832), an English philosopher and jurist.

*Tarquins* : the rulers of Rome for a considerable time.

*Sabine* : ancient Italians of the central Apennines were so called.

*Book of Job* : in the Old Testament, which contains colloquies between Job and his friends.

*Xenophon* : an Athenian general and historian.

*Mr. Buckle* : Henry Thomas (1821-1862), author of the *History of Civilization in England*.

*Mr. Mill* : John (1806-1873), an English philosopher.

*Abelard* : Peter (1079-1142), a theologian and philosopher.

*Lessing* : (1723-1781), a great German critic.

*Herder* : (1744-1803), German poet and critic.

*Saint Augustine* : the Christian missionary who converted England (A.D. 597).

### HUXLEY : *A Liberal Education*

Thomas Henry Huxley was born in 1825 at Ealing. He studied medicine at Charing Cross Hospital and then served as assistant-surgeon on H.M.S. *Rattlesnake* which sailed over the Southern Seas. During this voyage he collected many marine animals which he made the subject of papers read before learned scientific societies. In 1854 he was appointed a Professor of Natural History, a post which he held till 1885. He was Secretary of the Royal Society, and became its President in 1883. In 1892 he was made a Privy Councillor. He died at Eastbourne in 1895.

Besides his purely scientific works on vertebrate morphology and palaeontology, he wrote essays on educational themes and problems of human conduct and belief. His favourite theme was, however, evolution, and he took up the cudgels on behalf of Darwin many a time. Thus he came to be dreaded as a formidable controversialist who could state his case with great force, accuracy, and lucidity. Nor did these graces of style desert him when he handled other themes. 'He had clarity, wit, imagination and urbanity. Like Spencer, he had only one aim, to be lucid; but in the attainment of this literary grace, nearly all the others were added unto him.'

*Ichabod* : a Hebrew expression in the Bible which means 'the glory is departed'.

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- Retzsch* : (1779-1857), a German painter, etcher, and designer.  
*Test Acts* : Acts according to whose provisions the Catholics were excluded from places in the government or the universities.  
*'Poll'* : passmen, i.e. those who do not take an honours degree at Cambridge University are so called.  
*Newton* : Sir Isaac (1642-1727), the English philosopher and mathematician.  
*Falstaff's bill* : see Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Part I, Act II.  
*circumbendibus* : roundabout method.  
*King David* : the King of Israel.  
*Chaucer* : Geoffrey (1340 ?-1400), father of English poetry.  
*Goethe* : (1749-1832), the greatest of German men of letters.  
*Schiller* : (1759-1805), a great German poet and dramatist.  
*Croesus* : King of Lydia, known for his fabulous wealth.  
*Ni-buhr* : (1776-1831), a German historian and philologist.  
*Grote* : George (1794-1871), an English historian, author of a *History of Greece*.  
*Horace* : (65-8 B. C.), the famous Latin poet.  
*Terence* : (190 ?-159 B. C.), a Roman writer of comedies.  
*Parnassus* : a mountain in Greece, the abode of the Muses.  
*These be your gods, O Israel* : see the Bible, *I Kings*.  
*The Rector* : Mark Pattison (1813-1884), an English author and critic.  
*Faraday* : Michael (1791-1867), an English chemist and physicist.  
*Robert Brown* : (1773-1858), a celebrated botanist.  
*Lyell* : Sir Charles (1797-1875), an English geologist.  
*Darwin* : Charles Robert (1809-1882), an English naturalist who expounded the theory of organic evolution.  
*Bursch* : a German university student.  
*'Erdkunde'* : general knowledge of the earth.

### AL. SMITH : *Dreamthorp*

Alexander Smith was born at Kilmarnock in 1830. His father was a lace-pattern designer, and the son followed the same trade for some time in Glasgow. But he soon began to contribute occasional poems to the *Glasgow Citizen*. He published a volume of poems in 1853, which included *A Life Drama*. This was so popular that 10,000 copies were sold at once. He did not, however, enjoy this fame very long, as critics began to accuse him of plagiarism. This charge was in fact unfounded; though it may be admitted that his poems may contain a few unconscious echoes of Keats and Tennyson, there was little else to substantiate it. In 1854 he was appointed Secretary to Edinburgh University, and next year produced *Sonnets on the War* in conjunction with Sydney Dobell. He afterwards wrote *City Poems* and an epic, *Edwin of Deira*. Towards the end of his life he turned to prose, and produced a novel which is autobiographical, *A Summer in Skye* and

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*Dreamthorp*, a book of essays. He died in 1867, and a second volume of essays was published after his death.

In *Dreamthorp*, where the scene is usually laid at old Lillithgow, he gives us agreeable bits of description and reminiscence. 'The book is worth reading,' says a critic, 'for its sympathetic pictures of the country and its pleasant chatty criticism.'

*shoon* : shoes.

*Academy*: the Royal Academy of Painting etc., which holds an annual exhibition.

*Alfred*: Alfred the Great, King of the West Saxons (871-901).

*Maypole*: a pole painted and decked with flowers for dancing round on May-day.

*Str Charles Grandison*: the hero of Richardson's novel, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, designed to represent the ideal of a perfect hero. He combines in his person the qualities of a good Christian and a perfect English gentleman.

*Tom Jones*: the hero of Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*.

*Sophia*: Tom Jones is in the end married to her.

*Moses*: one of the sons of Dr. Primrose, the hero of the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

*Cinderella*: the heroine of a fairy tale who was made to serve as a household drudge by her stepmother. Generally, a scullery-maid or the like.

*Nestors*: Nestor was the King of Pylus, who in his old age joined the Greek expedition against Troy and was noted as a wise counsellor; here, very old bores.

*The Old Curiosity Shop*: a novel by Dickens.

*Nell*: The death of Little Nell is one of the most touching episodes in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Read Bret Harte's poem on this subject.

### HARRISON : *De Senectute*

Frederic Harrison, 'historian, biographer, philosopher, politician, critic, scholar, Alpine climber', was born in London in 1831. At the age of eleven he went to King's College School, London, where he began to display his enthusiasm for deserving causes. In 1849 he went up to Oxford where he spent six years as student, fellow and tutor. He went to the University a devout Christian, but he came back a free-thinker. He was called to the Bar in 1858, and worked in conveyancing and in the Courts of Equity. For three years he served on the Trades Union Commission, and then was Secretary to the Digest Commission. He practised law for fifteen years, but, having inherited a modest fortune, he withdrew to the occupation of 'urging on his neighbours opinions which meet with but moderate acceptance'. He tried to get into Parliament as the representative of the University of



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London; but failed. He served, however, for five years as an Alderman on the London County Council, was chief of the English Positivists, and worked as Professor of Jurisprudence and International Law at Lincoln's Inn Hall. He died in 1923 at the age of 92. To the last he retained vigour of body and mind, and his interest in men and books.

He wrote many books such as *The Meaning of History*, *Lectures on Education*, *Oliver Cromwell*, all of which show his abundant knowledge, his energy, his virility, his enthusiasm for noble causes, and his hatred of what is mean, cruel and ignoble.

*functus officio-rude jam donatus*: 'My duty is done—I have received my order of discharge.'

*otium cum dignitate*: ease with dignity.

*Gerontes*: the reference is to the old men who form the chorus in the *Alcestis* of Euripides.

*Athena*: the Greek Goddess of Learning.

*Artemis*: the Greek Goddess of Hunting.

*Jane Austen*: an English woman novelist of the nineteenth century. She wrote before Scott.

*Trollope*: Anthony (1815–1882), an English novelist.

*Disraeli*: Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804–1881), Prime Minister and novelist.

*Smollett*: Tobias George (1721–1771), a British novelist.

*Aristophanes*: a Greek writer of comedies.

*Cervantes*: the Spanish humourist who wrote *Don Quixote*.

*Attic*: a variety of Greek spoken by the Athenians.

*Liddell and Scott*: authors of the famous Greek Lexicon.

*Proh pudor*: for shame!

*Précieuses*: *Les Précieuses Ridicules*: one of Molière's comedies.

*The Français*: a theatre in Paris where the finest ancient and modern plays are staged

*Coquelin, etc., etc.*: celebrated French actors and actresses.

*Mascarille*: a character in one of Molière's comedies.

*cœnæ deorum*: feast of the gods.

*Maison de Molière*: the house of Molière, another name for the *Théâtre Français*.

*peripetia*: sudden reverses of fortune.

*joie de vivre*: joy in living.

*Edipus*: *Oedipus Tyrannus*, a play by Sophocles.

*Trilogy of Oresteia*: three plays *Agamemnon*, the *Choephora* and the *Eumenides*—by Aeschylus.

*Prometheus*: a play by Aeschylus.

*Jebb*: Sir Richard, a Greek scholar who translated Sophocles.

*Verrall*: Arthur W., the translator of Aeschylus.

*Murray*: Sir Gilbert, a Greek scholar who translated Euripides.

*Dr. Way*: the translator of the three Greek poets mentioned above.

*libretto*: the words as distinguished from the music.

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- Frogs* : a comedy by Aristophanes.  
*Ion, etc.* : plays of Euripides.  
*Seneca* : a Roman dramatic writer and philosopher.  
*Marlowe* : an Elizabethan dramatist, one of the precursors of Shakespeare.  
*Webster* : a seventeenth century English dramatist.  
*Prometheus, etc.* : characters in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles.  
*Sappho* : a Greek lyric poetess.  
*Theocritus* : a Greek pastoral poet.  
*Catullus* : a Roman poet.  
*Dante* : the great Italian poet who wrote *The Divine Comedy*.  
*Fabliaux* : fables in verse, popular in France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.  
*Morte d'Arthur* : translated by Sir Thomas Malory into English.  
*Calderon* : a Spanish dramatic poet.  
*Corneille* : a French dramatist of the seventeenth century.  
*Golden Treasury* : the well-known collection of English songs and lyrics chosen by Francis Turner Palgrave.  
*Oxford Book of Verse* : an anthology of English verse chosen by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.  
*lustra* : a lustrum is generally a period of five years.  
*Jowett* : the famous master of Balliol who translated Plato.  
*Monro* : probably Munro who is known as the editor of *Lucretius*.  
*Morley* : Lord Morley, an English statesman and man of letters. He was for some time the Secretary of State for India.  
*Saintsbury* : the famous historian and critic of literature.  
*Gosse* : Sir Edmund, a delightful literary critic who died only recently.  
*requiem æternam dant nobis* : 'They give us an eternal requiem.'  
*Limbo* : a region on the borders of hell.  
*Onarate, etc.*..... from Dante's *Inferno*, iv. 79 :—  
     Meantime a voice I heard which sounded so :  
     'Give honour to the poet loftiest ;  
     His shade returns, that left short while ago.'  
*The Ring and the Book* : a long poem by Browning.  
*ἄπαξ λεγόμενον* : an unusual or rare word.  
*mumpsimus* : one who sticks to old ways.  
*hortus siccus* : a collection of dried plants.  
*Einstein* : the French scientist who discovered the theory of Relativity.  
*Eddington* : a great living scientist.  
*Lodge* : Sir Oliver, a living scientist.  
*Wildon Carr* : Professor of Philosophy at King's College, London.  
*Haldane* : Lord Haldane, a statesman and man of letters. He died in 1929.  
*Rupert Brooke* : an English poet of great promise who was killed in the Great War.

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*a mule inglorious Milton* : from Gray's Elegy.

'*Even in our ashes live the wonted fires*' : from Gray's Elegy.

*circuses* : the reference is to the chariot races and gladiatorial contests which were held at Rome and other cities.

'*Ἀλμα, ποδοκείην, δίσκον, ἄκοντα, παλὴν*' : the five famous exercises of the Greeks such as jumping, running, quoit-throwing, javelin-throwing and wrestling.

*Solomon* : King of Israel in the tenth century B. C., noted for his wisdom.

*Andrew Marvell* : an English poet of the seventeenth century.

'*labour and sorrow*' : Psalm xc, verse 10.

'*In quietness and confidence* . . . ' Isaiah xxx, verse 15.

*Iulus naturae* : a curiosity.

'*My late espoused saint* .' Milton so addressed his dead wife in a sonnet.

*Gorgias* : a Greek rhetorician and sophist.

'*Nihil habeo*' . . . *etc.* : I have no reason to complain of old age.  
*conviva satur* : 'the guest who has had sufficient to eat.'

*Alfred Rethel* : a German painter.

'*Der Tod als Freund*' : death as a friend.

*Pax vobiscum* : peace be with you.

*Aveat atque, etc.* : 'My friends, I wish you luck and health—do not forget me.'

### SIR ED. ARNOLD : *Agra and the Taj*

Edwin Arnold was born in 1832, the son of a magistrate. He was educated at Rochester and King's College, London. After this he was elected a scholar of University College, Oxford, where he won the Newdigate with a poem on *Belshazzar's Feast*. He was for some time second master at Birmingham, and then came to India as Principal of the Government Sanskrit College, Poona. He was in India when the Mutiny broke out in 1857, but this did not diminish his sympathy with the Indian genius. He returned to England in 1861, and joined the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. He wrote much, but *The Light of Asia*, in which he chronicled the life and teachings of the Buddha, remains his masterpiece. He travelled a good deal, and had various titles (K.C.I.E. and C.S.I.) conferred on him. He died in 1904.

*Agra and the Taj* shows how well he could enter into the spirit of India's past, and how beautifully he could interpret the inmost soul of a place or person. This essay is a good specimen of his fluent, vivid and rich prose.

*Shah Jahan* : the Moghul Emperor of India (1628-1658), and the builder of the Taj.

*Aurangzeb* : deposed Shah Jahan his father and reigned as the Emperor of India from 1658 to 1707.

*Babur* : the founder of the Moghul Empire in India.

*Humayun* : the son of Babur and Emperor of India (1530-1556).

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- Akbar* : the son of Humayun. He was the greatest Moghul Emperor (1556-1605).  
*Jahangir* : the son of Akbar. He married the famous Nur Jahan.  
*Zoroaster* : the founder of the ancient Persian religion.  
*Kibitka* : a Tartar circular tent.  
*Timur* : a Mongol conqueror.  
*Chittlore* : a place celebrated in the annals of Rajputana.  
*M. Bernier* : a French physician at the court of Aurungzeb, who wrote an account of his travels in India.  
*Omrahs* : nobles.  
*Israfil* : the angel of music, who will sound the trumpet at the resurrection.

### STEVENSON : *The Lantern Bearers*

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in 1850 in Edinburgh, the son of Thomas Stevenson, Secretary to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses. He was educated at schools in Edinburgh, and at the University there. He was called to the Scottish Bar, but never practised. In his heart of hearts he wished to lead an active life, but ill-health prevented him from doing so. He turned his hand, therefore, to literature, and worked hard with the object of learning how to write. He wrote stories of adventure such as *Treasure Island*, romances such as *The New Arabian Nights*, short stories, books of essays like *Virginibus Puerisque* and delightful verse. All his life he waged a prolonged battle against that fell disease, consumption. He wandered in search of health over Europe and America, and at last settled on an estate in Samoa, where he died in 1894.

Stevenson was a fascinating personality. A lover of romantic adventure, he was a man of stern courage and deep charity. A prey to disease all his life, he never lost his robust optimism nor his joy in the beauty of this world. The best thing in his books, therefore, is Stevenson himself. Not less remarkable is his style. He himself has told us how he learnt to write—with much effort and labour and after many experiments. In the end he became a master of delicate rhythms and graphic phrases.

*easterly fisher-village* : the scene of this essay is laid in North Berwick, in the south-east of Scotland.

*King James* : James III, King of Scotland (1460-1488), who fought with his malcontent nobles that were led by Archibald Douglas.

*Tantallon* : Tantallon Castle, a stronghold of the Douglasses.

*Bell-the-Cat* : Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, who dared give battle to the king.

*Law* : North Berwick Law, a prominent hill.

*Quadrant* : a street so called because it resembles in shape a quarter-circle.

*Old Bailey Reports* : reports of cases at the Old Bailey Court, in London.

## NOTES

- '*His mind to him a kingdom was*' : an adaptation of the famous line of Sir E. Dyer : 'My mind to me a kingdom is.'
- Hawthorne* : (1804-1864), an American writer of romances and short stories.
- a god with a muck-rake* : in *Pilgrim's Progress* a miser is represented as raking dirt and straws on a floor.
- Beethoven* : (1770-1821), a great German musical composer.
- Whitman* : Walt, an American poet of the nineteenth century, remarkable for his originality.
- Zola* : (1840-'902), a French novelist, famous for his realism.
- '*By his fireside, etc.*' : from *The Prelude* by Wordsworth.
- Tolstoi* : (1828-1910), a great Russian novelist and socialist.
- André* : in George Sands' novel.
- Richard Feverel and Lucy Desborough* : see George Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel*.
- Kent* : in Shakespeare's *King Lear*.
- Dostoevsky* : (1821-1881) a celebrated Russian novelist.
- '*Iluu in antiquam silvam*' : from Virgil. It means, 'We enter the ancient forest.'

### BIRRELL : *The House of Commons*

Augustine Birrell was born at Wavertree, Liverpool, in 1850, the son of a Baptist minister. He was educated at Amersham, and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He was called to the Bar in 1875, and since then has had a varied career in letters, law, and politics. He was returned to Parliament in 1889 as a Liberal M. P. and served at different times as Minister of Education and Irish Secretary. Though law and politics have absorbed most of his energies, yet he has not neglected literature altogether. His first book, *Obiter Dicta*, was hailed with delight, and his other books on Hazlitt, Marvell and others have also had a warm welcome. In fact, many of his readers have wished that the time he devoted to politics had been given to literature. He is a charming essayist and possesses graceful fancy and whimsical humour. He is a great lover of books, and the pages of his writings are strewn with illuminating quotations, choice anecdotes and apt illustrations. He is a man of catholic tastes and can appreciate all sorts of books and all sorts and conditions of men.

- Mr. Balfour* : Arthur James, Earl of Balfour (b. 1848), the living British statesman and essayist.
- Lord Rosebery* : (1847-1929), an English statesman and man of letters.
- Lord Salisbury* : (1830-1903), an English statesman and Prime Minister.
- Mr. Chamberlain* : Joseph (1835-1914), an English statesman.
- Lord Kelvin* : (1824-1907), a British mathematician and physicist.
- Mr. Leslie Stephen* : an English critic and biographical and philosophical writer. He edited the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

## NOTES .

*Sheridan* : (1751-1816), an Irish dramatist and politician.  
*Sir Robert Walpole* : (1676-1745), a great English statesman.  
*Lord North* : (1732-1792), an English statesman.  
*The elder Pitt* : known as the Great Commoner (1708-1778).  
*his son* : William Pitt, an English statesman and a great orator.  
*Peel* : an English statesman.  
*Lord John Russell* : (1792-1878).  
*Richard Cobden* : (1804-1865).  
*Rob Roy* : one of Scott's novels.  
*Lord Melbourne* : (1779-1848).  
*Sir William Harcourt* : (1827-1904).

## GALSWORTHY : *A Portrait*

John Galsworthy was born in 1867. He was educated at Harrow and Oxford, and was called to the Bar in 1890. The law, however, never attracted him and he did not practise with any ambition or zest. He spent some time in travel, and on one of his voyages he met and made friends with Joseph Conrad, the famous novelist. In 1898 appeared his first novel *Jocelyn*. It was followed by others, among them being *The Forsyte Saga*, his masterpiece, in which he has drawn the upper middle classes of English society with sure and unerring skill. He has also written plays (*Justice, Strife, The Fugitive* and others) short stories and essays, all of which deal with the social problems of the day and are characterized by a clear, direct and vigorous style. John Galsworthy is one of the major novelists and playwrights of the day. The old gentleman described here also appears as one of the characters in *The Forsyte Saga*.

*the days of Pickwick* : the early part of the nineteenth century.

Pickwick, a jovly fat old man, one of the creations of Dickens.

See *The Pickwick Papers*.

*Alderney cow* : a famous breed of cows found in Alderney, one of the Channel Islands.

*Mozart* : (1756-1791), an Austrian musical composer.

*Meyerbeer* : a German Jewish composer.

*Gluck* : a German composer.

*Herbert Spencer* : (1820-1903), an English philosopher and sociologist.

*Wagner* : A German composer who originated the musical drama.

At Bayreuth in Bavaria he had his own theatre for the performance of his operas.

*Hogarth* : a famous eighteenth century painter known by his cartoons and caricatures.

*Rubens and Vandyke* : Flemish painters.

*Rembrandt* : a Dutch painter famous for his colouring.

*Turner* : an English landscape painter.

*Botticelli* : an Italian painter.

*Whistler* : an American painter who worked in England.

*the Three Towns* : in Cornwall : Penzance, Trur and St. Ives.

## NOTES

*Turgenev* : a modern Russian novelist.

*George Eliot* : (1819-1890), an English novelist, author of *Adam Bede*, etc.

*Marryat* : an English naval officer and novelist, whose stories of sea life are still very popular among boys.

*Blackmore* : famous as the author of *Lorna Doone*.

*Taglioni* : an Italian ballet dancer.

*Irving* : Sir Henry Irving, a great English actor.

*Duke of Devonshire* ; *Palmerston* : English statesmen.

*Grisi*, etc. : famous singers. Jenny Lind was said to have the finest female voice.

